Why Dogs Stopped Flying

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SCARLETT PENSTEMON

For Keith Wilson

Bees can't see red
but hummingbirds can
so the scarlet penstemon
curls its lower lip,
picks it lover as certain
as Cleopatra picked Caesar.

In the southern Utah summer,
in the late afternoon
of long shadows, shimmering,
the scarlet penstemon pouts,
and, oh, sweet Jesus, to be
a broad-tailed hummingbird then.