*The first two lines of this poem establish the poet's/ speaker's affectionate attitude to the bird. The contrasting adjectives add to the idea that he thinks the bird is quaint.*

1. Oh never in this hard world was such an absurd Oh never

in this hard world

was such

an absurd

1. Charming Charming

utterly

disarming

little bird,

*The next three lines (to the end of the first stanza) shows images of the bird moving. The distinctly visual image is the bird on the head of a small girl.*

The mossy green, the sunlight honey eater That darts from seribbly gum to banksia tree And lights upon the head of my small daughter.

The mossy, green, the sunlit

honey-eater

That darts

from scribbly-gum to banksia tree

***And*** lights

upon the head of my small daughter.

*The second stanza provides the image of the quick even nervous movements of the bird as it juggles' the two opposing urges : safety and survival of the species. Stewart suggests that humans also have these opposing instincts.*

It must decide,

for men and birds alike,

*As* pick-pick-pick it goes

with its sharp beak,

If

so much

trust

is possible in nature;

And back it darts

to that safe banksia tree

Then swoops on my own head,

the brave wild creature.

It thinks

it must have hair

to line its nest

And hair will have,

and will chance

the rest;

And up and down my neck\ and then my daughter's those prickly black feet run

that tugging beak, -

And *loud like wind*

whirrs its green 'wing-feathers.

*Stewart ends this poem on a reflective, even pessimistic and sad note. He invites the bird to risk pulling hair from his and his daughter 's heads. His reason is that they are not a risk to the bird; they won't hurt the bird. Stewart is suggesting that humans and other predators usually hurt these birds.*

Then take yourchoice

from me or

those fair tresses

You darting bird

too shy for our caresses;

There's just this clap in Nature and in man

Where birds may perch on heads

and pull out hair

And if

you want to chance it,

well, you can.

\*this is a typing error on the poetry sheet.