Olive Senior

The Secret of Flying Close to the Sun
Without Melting Wings

Discard the illusion of bearing yourself up. Only Bird, Sun’s messenger, can transport you. This is not about wings of power (that will burn, melt) but the power of wings lent to you by Grandfather Macaw. If he chooses to hear you.

Know that you come into the world featherless and naked. Like an egg. A cypher. Grandfather might permit you to pluck one set of feathers to dress yourself in. Lend you hollow bones (to be returned after flight); breathe you into the lightness of air. (The feathers you might be allowed to keep for many lifetimes.) To prepare, know it is not a question of artifice but of becoming. Not build up but strip down. To dress up you need the feathers, the paint, the beads, the flowers. The hallucinogenic rhythm of the rattles, the drums, your steed.

Power will come not swiftly on the wing but feather out of the homage. The humility. The loving preparation. The desire to transform into Other. Leading to that auspicious moment: the whirr of wings speak plain. You have entered that place where flight is a given.
For you, flight is given as gift of bird messenger sustained by rattle, by drum, by song. You soar, sail, glide. For a brief moment you gain Sun's nod.

You are Bird itself. But know: such ecstasy is not forever. You will reenter your world, but let down lightly cradled as gently as egg.