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Learning a Bird

To pay attention . . . is our endless and proper work. (Mary Oliver)

Be called to wild places; gather names, welcome flowers—beside the road, through cracks in sidewalks—

miracles on a wooded trail.

Pay rapt attention.

Treasure the bark of remarkable trees; learn a bird, recognize its special voice, distinct from the blur of warbles,

trills, and chirps that saturate its habitat.

Whatever you seek, there it will be.

And if you need a poem, it's been here—quietly waiting—unadorned, in the shape of wildflowers, scattered

like bread crumbs outlining your path.