

Forthcoming in *The Bangalore Review*, 2025

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.