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## My Mother Tries to Teach Me About Listening, or: Another Poem About Birds

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*My Mother Tries to Teach Me About Listening, or: Another Poem About Birds*

I want to know the yellowthroat's quick trill  
as it ricochets off my window and the song  
he passes on to his young. I want to learn  
birdsong: how to identify a species from its call  
and know whether, like a bird's, a child's voice  
is a kind of aural fingerprint, unique in its demands  
for Goldfish® or the swing-push that would  
shatter the barrier between earth and heaven.

Before you first strained your ears toward  
the sound of my breathing and mothered the night  
into my lungs, before you memorized every  
thorned and honeyed edge of my voice—  
did you feel this way too? Will I ever listen  
to a child's voice and hear it  
otherworldly? learn it well enough  
to paint its spectrogram by heart?