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## the birds make everything okay

Marybeth Holleman



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## **the birds make everything okay**

*November 13, Anchorage*

it is freezing rain and it is dark  
and there should be snow but no  
it's not cold enough and the bears  
are still awake and roaming our  
neighbourhood looking for food the  
salmon and berries all gone and  
the snowshoe hares have turned  
white are bright against the brown  
of climate change's new order and  
I have just read how many are gone  
a quarter of them winged away from  
us in just my lifetime disappeared.  
but there are nuthatches at the suet  
and one slips its beak into the ridges  
of the gnarled willow, and there is  
a steller's jay winging in low from  
spruce to snatch one last peanut,  
and earlier I saw, scrabbling for grit  
at the edge of a half-frozen puddle,  
a downy woodpecker, bright red  
crown nodding, yes, and it did not  
fly off at my approach. it did not leave.

Raised in North Carolina's Smokies, **MARYBETH HOLLEMAN** moved to Alaska's Chugach Mountains after falling head over heels for Prince William Sound just two years before the EVOS oil spill. She's author of *The Heart of the Sound* and *Among Wolves*, and co-editor of *Crosscurrents North*, among others. Her first poetry collection, *tender gravity*, is forthcoming from Red Hen Press. Her prose and poetry focus on encounters and communications for/with/among species and place. Her website is [www.marybethholleman.com](http://www.marybethholleman.com).