

### **Sprague's Pipit, Eastend, Saskatchewan**

Audubon's Missouri skylark—  
your song, spherical, focuses my every cell  
on this otherworldly utterance  
expansive and ephemeral as sky.

A strange sonata from 50 metres,  
composed in a key I can't conceive,  
for blue grama and buffalo beans,  
wind and sage and silence  
for all the places remnant grasslands linger.

Hope made audible.

Not visible, though I could scan the sky for hours  
for your small, silvered form  
skylarking  
or plunging, abruptly, to the ground.

Sometimes, a small brown bird appears  
skulking on a nearby hillside, disarmingly ordinary  
bearing no resemblance  
to the one who casts his mating call to earth  
like some prehistoric spell.

Not this mottled, terrestrial being  
awkward on orange feet  
descended from dinosaurs  
searching the grass for insects  
to feed his insatiable song.

*Angela Waldie*

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**Orange-crowned Warbler, Found Beneath the Lilac**

*A small, sharp-billed  
drab-colored warbler.  
Tawny orange crown  
rarely discernible  
in the field.*

Such details are intended to be read,  
perhaps aloud, from a field guide  
held up beside a brief glimpse,  
an indrawn breath,  
an unknown warbler  
resting  
for a moment  
in the new leaves of the lilac  
or in the dappled shade  
beneath the spruce.

Such details,  
the earthbound words for wonder,  
mere shadows  
of a memory  
of soft, corporeal sunshine  
migrating north.

But words cannot begin  
to name this still weightlessness  
lifted from the firm ground  
of early morning.

Olive-streaked breast, obvious,  
orange crown, undeniable,  
a certainty never meant  
to be held in the hand like sorrow.

*Angela Waldie*

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## **Moving Day**

*after Vivian Maier, street photographer, self-portrait taken in a mirror*

Does he know he holds you  
in his heavily gloved hands,  
framed, slantwise, in another reflection  
of the day?

It is February or November  
or some other leafless month  
in New York City or Chicago.

Someone is moving into a high rise  
where brick echoes brick echoes brick.  
Five windows peer forward, though not one  
opens its blinds to see.

But you are watching, as you always watched,  
not planning, when you left for a walk that day  
to be stilled in a reflection of someone else's transience.  
You had your own.

You walked those streets for decades  
seeking the stoic, the exuberant, the lost,  
held their silences in your hands, etched  
their secrets in your darkroom language

saved them in a storage locker  
until even that small square of permanence  
you could not keep.

So a real estate agent bought a box of auctioned faces,  
candid and joyous and furrowed,  
and found you

gazing into someone else's mirror  
in your sensible hat and coat  
on a winter afternoon, almost  
smiling.

*Angela Waldie*

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