

Poetry Porch: Poetry

Our Project

By Hillary Sallick

We're trying to do
something very difficult
What is it we're trying to do
It's pleasant here in the yard
so green I look up
branches and leaves everywhere
A backdoor opens
beyond the screen of spruce
always human activity
A cardinal zips across lots
These fences mean nothing to it
We are in our separate places
abiding within the rules
There's a squabble of birds now
How does a song sparrow sound
when it squabbles
And a high call
lilts be-bee be-bee
Is that a chickadee
I'd like to take the course
on identifying bird voices
There are many birds here
and only one is visible
How do they do that?
I found a feather floating
in the birdbath and plucked
it out before emptying
the murky water
pouring in the fresh clear
water for the birds
I love to see them drinking and
splashing there

The feather is from a jay
with bands of black and blue
and a pointed white tip How
do the threads of the feather know
to make that pattern?
I've taken a shower
My own body is a mystery
flesh and folds and keratin
cartilage and air
hunger thirst voice
It's night now The moon has set
and high up are bright stars
Even the streetlights
can't hide them
I see patches of sky eons
of time and space between buildings
Haven't I always been here
doing this trying to be
something true
There's a sadness in your gaze
You don't speak of it
Why do so
Your gaze speaks it
How can I answer you
How can I make you
smile