

## Bird Songs

By Chris Minton

I passed you every morning, for we had a routine.  
Like a good New Yorker, I kept my head down.  
I did not look at you, not even once,  
but it was impossible to avert my ears.

You spoke to me, uninvited, every time.  
The things you said were maddeningly inconsistent.  
They rained down, a chaotic soup of judgements  
I was left to wrestle with in my own time.

One morning I heard you smile before you spoke.  
*"You know what I like about you?"* A pause.  
*"I like the way you make yourself laugh when you're all alone.  
That is,"* you pronounced, *"cute and quite endearing."*

Another morning your voice wasn't as soft.  
*"You know what's really sad?"* Silence.  
*"What's really sad is how much energy you expend  
worrying about what other people think of you."*

We carried on in this manner, you and I.  
How many months I could not say.  
I clung to your sing-song voice throughout the day  
despite my self-admonitions to do otherwise.

One morning as I approached your nest,  
I stopped and looked, making eye contact for the first time.  
There you sat, surprisingly beautiful in your knowing.  
You laughed and the sound echoed across the years.

I knew then who you were and I relished my understanding.  
Your mouth opened and let fly no words, only a bird song.  
It was joyful and I knew what you were telling me, and I believed you.  
*"Now,"* you sang, *"we're getting somewhere."*