

**Day 15. Keep Hope Alive Against the Icy Odds**

In her book Comfort Prayers, editor June Cotner shares a poem by Barbara Crooker titled: “Hope.”

Winter sunlight, fool’s gold, pours in the south window,

fails to warm. Weak as tea, pale as bone, insubstantial

as dust on a mantle, water falling over stone.

The ground outside, hard, white as the hospital bed

where my friend waits after her marrow transplant,

hoping her white count will rise. I watch

birds at the window –

sparrows, titmice, finches –

the plain brown, the speckled,

the ordinary, no flashy travelers up from the tropics,

where winter is a verb, not a state of the heart.

I go out to fill the feeder, feel silky grain slip

through my fingers: millet, proso, corn.

Little birds,

little angels, singing their small song of consolation.

A thin drizzle of sun slips through clouds,

a strand of hope against the icy odds.

Look around your winter environment today. Where do you see a strand of hope?