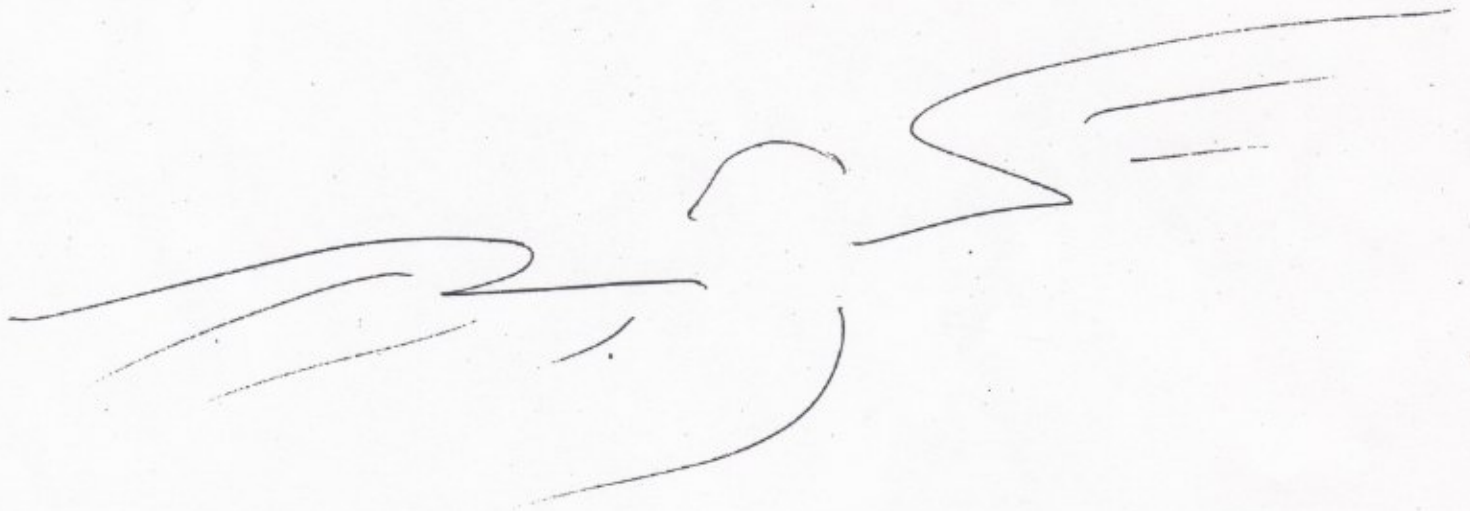


snaped
from a dead in
snow & wind in all directions

no

Like breath itself
a flock of small birds - in
& out across the orchard



bird poems for Gus
12-99
Love, VR Bodner
mun

from Owl Canyon
the sounds
of our mothers + fathers

the quiet heart
the gentle eyes that see
everything

"it was just like being
with your father!"
my mother says

long shadows
in the saguaros
vermillion flycatchers

her grandson stops
to listen

the last thing he hears
—"I love you, Dad"

this cold morning
a juncos sits very still
in the sun

new sticks over old
the magpies twist & poke

today I am only
the sky
the weathered deck
the flicker's sharp cries
the canyon wren dissolved
in song

close-cropped field - rows of
turkey vultures with their wings
spread out to dry

a hundred magpies!
black & white, ribbon-tailed, each
wingbeat ripples the sky

in the pines the robins sing
like ripe fruit

somewhere in the old forest
— a goshawk

Sparrow in the bush
gulping down a
soft, green caterpillar

magpies noisy
in the orchard
the youngsters short-tailed
squawking & begging

& the young hawk cries
all day all week
from the other side
of the valley

raindays - the birds give up
& sing anyway

a soggy hawk just sits
on the telephone wire

young jays, half-crested beg
from their parents
at the feeding tray

tidbits of song -

agrosbeak waits its turn

well before dawn
jays at the feeding stump
dark-feathered

no wonder the kingfisher rattles
— the fish can't hear him

August geese — sun
on their bellies
which season
do they call?

head down

I carry the dead crow
sleek — feathered, stiff
black
as the sun

holding by the feet
I lay her down
in the green-mowed field
she slips away —
another sky, pale
clear
filled with light

new day

same old rooster
shouting up the light

Like breath itself
a flock of small birds - in &
out across the orchard

what sorrows
have I caused her - knowing/unknowing
ignorant, blind?
her eyes though dim
to print still catch the birds
my father loved, hold them briefly
tenderly
let them go

she hears their songs as well, each
time different
each new - if only
she had paid more attention
listened better
- applied herself
maybe she could have learned from him
to call their names, to send
a phoebe or Pacific slope flycatcher
across
with a message just for him

as it is
she speaks with him directly, sitting
by their big window
through the long sunset
with a glass of wine

What have I done?

What have I not done?

the blue birds are hovering
just under the snow

waiting

to hear

from 1999
into 2000

into the stream
last year's leaves
this year's leaves

one last moth on the screen
the glass door frame still warm
but outside — the river
already brittle

the moon stares fiercely through my window
but still I have to get a flashlight
to be sure I'm not writing over
some masterpiece

what is left of us that stays
when arteries close
& brain frazzles?

tears for lost loved ones
for (these) words unspoken

poor bug! at the end
of a spider's line,
swinging

"...endless road..."

show me the way
to go home... " RMB, in a dream

'in the dark time
my son's voice "have you been up
on the mountain?"

choose this way or that
all lead to the top

on a different path
I think of my daughter
— wild turkey feather

what have I done?
what have I not done?
bluebirds hover
just under the snow
waiting to hear

lodged in the stream
a beaver-chewed stick shakes
with the current

sun washes down the mountain

like breath itself
a flock of small birds — in
& out across the orchard