

excerpt from *if you watch a goldfinch every day from winter to spring*,
in *les Oiseaux Sauvages de Detroit* [WS page 1 of 2]

january 18: three little birds perching on my elbow

tapping my arm

cutting on the dotted line and all around it

giving the man with a dog a haircut

this one with her head down and ponytail puff on top of her head

this one with her glasses, blue-framed and too big for her even-small-for-kindergarten face

this one still cutting repeating something about

I need to cut along the lines

while making fantastic shapes anyway and giving every one

—every outlined image to illustrate new words in an exponential five-year-old vocabulary—

a haircut

repeating this

cutting that instead

and farting loudly the whole time

january 20: early shift of white-throated sparrows, titmice, chickadees in ones and twos,

ground crew of house sparrows, at least two red-breasted nuthatches, three pairs of

house finches

february 1: “It looks rough out there today,” he said while eating cereal, looking out on

the darkening rather than lightening grey of morning. “What do you mean?” she said. “It

looks like gang warfare and carjackings and mothers crying in the street.” She thought it

was an interesting way to think about an incoming snowstorm.

february 2: thirty-three buffleheads, twenty-eight canvasbacks, one mute swan, pair of

mallards, gulls

february 3: white-throated sparrows singing

february 4: three goldfinches just after lunch

february 5: a long (electric) line of rock doves

february 6: male peregrine falcon eating something big, cardinals and chickadees singing, starlings imitating

february 8: mourning dove

mourning why?

february 22 instructions for walking on the streets of Detroit: Wear tall boots.

february 24: seven goldfinches in the very small maple tree

february 27: american crow by voice

march 2: white-throated sparrow singing for about a week now

march 3: If you watch a goldfinch every day from winter to spring, will you not notice him saturating with yellow the way you don't notice your wife getting fat or your husband becoming bald until looking at a wedding photograph?

march 11: five canada geese in an asymmetrical V

march 13: cooper's hawk with grackle

march 14: red-tailed hawk slamming claws-first into freeway embankment

march 21: Why don't chu take me out, show me shit? Treat me special? You wasn't this typa person before. Nu-uh. No. No you wasn't. No you wasn't.