J. DREW LANHAM

Lifeless List

Do you know how hard it is to admire plumage on a bird? To separate one warbler chip note from another? Or count the telltale hind wing spots on a butterfly? Or remember the name of a wildflower seen a hundred times? Or gather the energy to find the Latin binomial of a beetle in a field guide? Or even give a fuck what the name of anything is beyond the last Black body that lay still after being murdered by the police? I can no longer keep track of the last hurricane that blew in from the earth's rising heat. Of the last tweet inciting riot. The last fire that burned and burned and burned. Of the hundreds of thousands of infected and dead. It is a sad exhausting lifeless list I'd rather not keep, growing longer by the hour. There's little room left in my heart these dark days for listing anything. Hardest task comes in not becoming a member of a litany of dread.

From *Sparrow Envy: Field Guide to Birds and Lesser Beasts*, Hub City Press, 2021. Reprinted by permission of the author.

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VERSE IN PLACE

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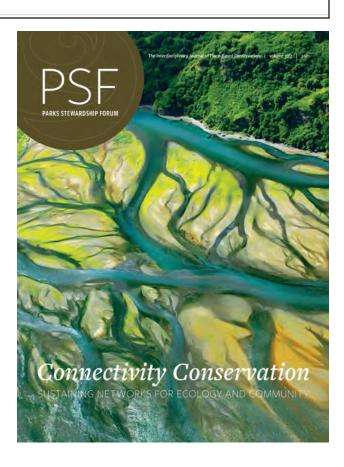
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A glacial river on Kodiak Island, Alaska, meets the North Pacific Ocean. Coastal deltas represent the critical interface between terrestrial, freshwater, and marine connectivity. | STEVE HILLEBRAND / USFWS