Where the Tiny Things Are: Feathered Essays
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Published by Punctum Books

Walker, Nicole.
Where the Tiny Things Are: Feathered Essays.

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Microtrain

A regular-sized train can’t do it. The tracks crisscross in too many layers. There is not enough money in the world to build four million bridges deep. But if the train is small enough, fiber optic, microscopic, the tracks could bend and weave and thread. Instead of stopping at crossings for cars or for anti-abortion protesters, the veins could thread like those in a body. In that body, red could stand for oxygen and blue for carbon dioxide and the world would be happy to get and return either. In a body, the reliance on input and output would be a fair and reasonable thing. In the lungs, the carbon dioxide exchanges for oxygen with the justice of stoichiometry. Transformation is always possible. The oxygen has persuasive arguments. The CO₂ has its own. No cell changes its body, it just changes its mind. This body holds its power in its tiny mitochondrial engines—forward moving but not at anyone else’s great expense. This is a kind of country I could live in. One day, it will be small enough.