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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I only have one friend, Steve, who thinks we will survive the apocalypse. I stockpile jarred tomatoes. He stockpiles guns. We will need each other and will have to find a way to traverse the 500 miles that separates us. We will also need: sourdough starter made from wretched old grapes, fermenting in yet another Mason jar; one of those new-fangled straws that filters water even when you stick it into a nearly toxic cesspool; one cow or goat for milk; two chickens for eggs; a solar-powered automobile that can hold at least a family of four, a goat, and two chickens; sun; limes; avocado; salt. We will not need to reinvent the wheel or electricity. We may need to reinvent the Internet and flush toilets. We will need scissors, papers, pens, paperclips, staples—general office supplies—because if there is one thing we will surely miss, it is rebuilding the tax code. Benjamin Franklin said it was the library, or possibly fire stations, that made a civilization but if there is one thing that unites us all, it is our love of April 15th. Shared goals. A catholic expectation. We will need seeds from not-Monsanto and heart medication from not-Merck. We will need the old growth forest back. We will need the polar bear back. We will need that one frog who keeps changing his sex back and forth depending on how much Prozac is in the water to finally pick a team and stick with it. We will need an ocean full of fish and oysters who forgot the name red tide. We will need someone to make movies and someone to critique them. We may need books but possibly only
ones that have nice things to say about fish. We will need to partner with the otters to learn how to stay warm in the winter and to discuss with the prairie dogs how to make a proper communal town where all the berries are good for all the dogs, prairie or not. We will need not only jarred tomatoes but lemon curd. We will need apple pie. We will need to learn to make béchamel with milk from our friend, the goat. We will need someone who knows how to make guitars and someone who knows how to play one. We will need a blanket, a square sewn by everyone who ever thought, man, this might be the end and then, wakes up the next day, happy that it isn’t. In the end, we will need a lot of things but I think it’s going to be OK because these days, Mason jars are plentiful and everyone I know is named Steve.