

Bird's WAY

E.J. Bahng



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Dedication

To all the birds,
birdwatchers, and
bicyclists on Earth.





Namsu liked wandering around neighborhoods with her golden retriever.

She wanted to see things from the tops of hills and nearby trees.

She also liked watching clouds moving above the hills along with summer butterflies.





Somedays, Namsu biked the long cornfield route from her home to the far reaches of town.

When bicycling, Namsu tended to think about people, giving her worries to the head winds, and being comforted by the back winds.

Day by day. Season by season.





One day, there was a strong spring snow storm in Ames, Iowa. It was a very harsh cold spring in early May.

Her friends told Namsu that Iowa birds would have a hard time finding food and shelter. This somehow took her to the birdwatching memories with her friends at Outer Banks.

On that day, Namsu noticed a beautiful female cardinal hopping around an apple that she had rolled on the snow-covered backyard.



Her friend Pat, who was a birdwatcher and science teacher, taught Namsu and her friends how to watch birds with binoculars.

Namsu was fascinated by the ways of birds.





Encouraged by her friends and inspired by her memories, Namsu built a small bird sanctuary in her backyard and made observations about which birds visited.

When summer came, she bicycled around the town seeing more and more the patterns of bird ways and their worlds.









When the storms were gone and the land turned green, male house finches are jostling for female house finches, trying to find their mating partners.

The paired ones are constantly courting each other with beautiful songs, with their feathers, and feeding each other.



Somedays while riding her bike, Namsu saw house finches carrying various things in their bills, such as twigs, straws, and dog hair for their nests.





On later days in the summer season,
Namsu saw birds carrying insects in their
bills.

She wondered what those were for?









By July, suddenly her bird sanctuary was full of multiple bird sounds in various pitches.

On the backyard deck, there were three mother birds teaching their fledglings how to fly.

A 50-word summary

A late winter storm came in May to Ames, Iowa, where Namsu lived. She learns seasonal ways of birds' care and love in an unexpected way.

Keywords

Iowa birds, seasons, birdwatching, Outer Banks, winter storm in May, bird sanctuary, & bicycling.

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There were many special summers and summer visitors, ever since I nested in Ames, Iowa. Ones that involved me flying out somewhere, and others were me hosting loved ones who flew more than 14 hours across the Pacific Ocean to the Midwestern heartland. This book was made possible by these two-way migrations of friends and family.

I am thankful for the mentorship of colleagues I met at the annual Summer Writing Workshop of Women Faculty in Science Education at Outer Banks, North Carolina. Each day for a week every summer, I learned to write nearly all day long, to critique, to listen, to exercise, to do science activities, and to cook dinner together. One of the science activities was birdwatching which before then I had never intentionally done. We woke up early in the morning and walked around Outer Banks for two hours doing nothing but “birdwatching,” which was followed by many small discussions about birds. I was fascinated with birds, and have become a birdwatcher. Learning bird’s worlds and ways humbles me whenever I watch them and in every season.

My great appreciation goes to JuneHyuk Jeong and MoonJeong Bahng, my nephews who visited Ames when they were 10 years old. Their young minds, curiosity, and infinite passion for learning new things inspired me to set up a “mini-school” in my nest where we naturally developed a summer curriculum of art, reading, poetry, dancing, pop-songs, science journals with meal-worms, Moon observations, and bird observations at the Iowa State University Arboretum and Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake.

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Finally, I am forever indebted to my mother who mostly took care of all three meals during the three-month summer learning times. “Mom, it was you who noticed the three mother birds on the backyard deck teaching their fledglings to fly on a hot July! That was something.”



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