

Poetry

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## Poetry In Memory of White Feathers

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The rare white sparrow that was the subject of our research paper 'Non-Invasive Tagging' (J Oceanogr Mar Res, Vol. 7 Iss. 3 No: 195) has died. This memorial poem about her beloved bird was written for Jenny Collins who co-authored and conducted the research behind that paper.

### Ode to White Feathers

Because it was so unexpected,  
she never trained her gaze.  
No senses were ever elected,  
to recognize its daze.

White feathers visited her yard one day,  
thought she, a rare beauty of nature to behold.  
Dear friend said it simply mutated that way,  
but what do scientists know, their facts are cold.

It flew in on the wind and came to stay,  
so a fleeting breeze, unseen and unheard,  
brought this little white sparrow to her feeding tray,  
to climb the pecking order, bird over bird.

This rare white sparrow taught us so much,  
about the internal order of a flock.  
No tagging is needed for flight or perch,  
when a member so clearly exhibits its stock.

The notice in your flock may not be as distinct,  
but any discerning mark is a sufficient vow,  
that distinguishes, broad or succinct,  
behavior that the group is hiding now.

White feathers first visit was in the winter cold,  
how lucky was she, it came to stay,  
and live out its days, in bird-years grow old,  
a feeder, a feaster, but never a prey.

You cannot set your mind to rest,  
when White Feathers' wings adorn,  
joy to the heart, mind, and soul confess,  
ere long, White Feathers' flight is born.

After four years of delighting with a dazzling show,  
White Feathers' left us for bird heaven's glow.