

SALLY ZAKARIYA

Note to My Younger Self

Expect a lot of birds—squabbles at the feeder,
trident tracks in the snow.

Learn who they are—drab sparrow, starling,
crowned cardinal, titmouse, towhee, nuthatch.

Learn their habits, their singular songs.

Learn the garden flowers too—sweet william,
larkspur, coreopsis, all the summer brights,
as well as winter's hellebore.

Then wildflowers—pipsissewa, bloodroot,
hepatica, joe pye weed, lady's slipper.

And the trees that stand over them—oak,
its fall leaves crisp-dark as tobacco, and maple
with its winged seed, sycamore, hickory, beech.

Teach them to your son as you walk in the woods.

In later years you may forget all this and more
besides—the names of constellations, rocks,
animals of land and sea, but you will still
know them as old friends.

No one can have too many.



ABOUT SALLY ZAKARIYA

Sally Zakariya is the author of *Arithmetic and other verses from late in life* and *Insectomania* (Richer Resources Publications 2011 and 2013); she is also the editor of *Joys of the Table: An Anthology of Culinary Verse* (Richer Resources Publications 2015). Her poems have appeared in *The Broadkill Review*, *Emerge Literary Journal*, *The Northern Virginia Review*, *EDGE*, and *Third Wednesday*. She received a BA in English literature from Swarthmore College and lives in Arlington, Virginia, where she works as a free-lance writer and editor. She is an active member of the Poetry Society of Virginia and its Northern Virginia Poetry Salon. She heads the collective blog *But Does It Rhyme?* at www.butdoesitrhyme.com.

