

## BARRY ROTH

# Learning Again the Names of Birds

Blue-covered field guide  
with homemade plastic cover against rain,  
lost when my car was totaled—  
contained my *life list*,  
checked boxes and scribbled notes,  
old sit-downs and sightings.

On San Nicolas Island,  
a raven thrashed a finch,  
tossing away the head like a bottle cap.  
Oystercatchers and turnstones:  
hard on the limpets.

High in Tuolumne Meadows,  
a mountain bluebird:  
how different from the lowland kind!

Most will not yield to memory  
and the new book,  
tabbed and glossy,  
will provide me with names, not powers.

**Barry Roth** is a writer, editor, and biologist living in San Francisco, California. His biology practice focuses on the lives and identities of the snails and slugs of North America. He earned a master's degree in creative writing at San Francisco State University. His creative work has been published in *Sequoia*, *West Marin Review*, and elsewhere, and anthologized in *Under Thirty*.

## JUDITH SCHAECHTER

*Wild Life*, 2017

Stained glass, cut, sandblasted, engraved, painted, stained  
and fired, and assembled with copperfoil, 44 x 40 in

