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Birdtalk

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DENNIS SCHMITZ

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Their beaks tell you what they feed on:
needle probes trees for bugs,

blunt-beak breaks seeds.
What about Tina, newly-divorced, wiping

her beak as she hauls her laundry,
stamping emotional hunger down

our shared backstairs?
The sparrow, seed-geek, calls

out the size of what it discards
until it discards even its call.

Tina's overheard *sotto-voce* is
a loose fit for every bird-

emotion except wrath, which humans
can will, probably first in nouns,

or the verbs which help us
measure our inadequate stools or the meds

like grief we weep late night into a pillow,
thus, we hope, discarding them.