

## [The Naming of Small Things](#) [1]

May 21, 2018 [Featured Poetry](#) [2]

[Science and Society](#) [3]

[Nature](#) [4]

### Poem by Barbara Edelman



### The Naming of Small Things

(1)

I've slept so well here at the sill  
of open window, pillow nearly touching  
the screen. This land is rainforest, charged  
by rhythms of cicadas, riffing in and out by

## The Naming of Small Things

Published on Talking Writing (<https://talkingwriting.com>)

---

day then blasting symphonic into darkness,  
from tymbals in the abdomens of courting  
males, a pattern that repeats and repeats  
until I listen for variations in pitch, in  
accent; variations within variations,  
the wide night calling out—  
*sleep brilliantly, pay attention.*

(2)

One more night before I drive back  
into infuriating news. Yesterday, lost  
on an unblazed trail, I hiked into a  
rhododendron tunnel so long I ended up  
in a neighboring state. A small fear  
burrowed in me like a tick. I kept yanking  
webs from my face and arms. The galls  
on oak trees made me uneasy.

(3)

Tonight, a crash near my head.  
I sit up, believing—on the trail  
out of sleep—that a bear hurled itself  
against the cabin wall. Did I leave  
food out? No other sound. A branch  
must have fallen on the roof and remained.  
What makes me think then of the pain  
at the tip of my months-old incision,  
ignored for weeks? I touch it. The intruder  
lump, cut out, has reemerged, in the fat  
of my calf. Strange for a supporting limb  
to share the name of a baby animal.

---

### Art Information

- “Tree of Life” © Janel Houton; used by permission.

## The Naming of Small Things

Published on Talking Writing (<https://talkingwriting.com>)

---



Barbara Edelman is the author of the poetry collection *Dream of the Gone-From City* (Carnegie Mellon University Press, 2017) and of two poetry chapbooks. Her work has appeared recently in the journals *One*, *Raleigh Review*, and *Askew*. She teaches writing at the University of Pittsburgh, where she also coordinates the Writers' Café.

**Source URL:** <https://talkingwriting.com/naming-small-things>

### Links:

- [1] <https://talkingwriting.com/naming-small-things>
- [2] <https://talkingwriting.com/talkingwriting-categories/featured-poetry>
- [3] <https://talkingwriting.com/tw-channels-and-categories/science-and-society>
- [4] <https://talkingwriting.com/tw-channels-and-categories/nature>