

**Contact:**

Chelsea Biondolillo

(512) 423-0298

[chelsea.biondolillo@yahoo.com](mailto:chelsea.biondolillo@yahoo.com)

Publisher: Jesi Bender / KERNPUNKT Press

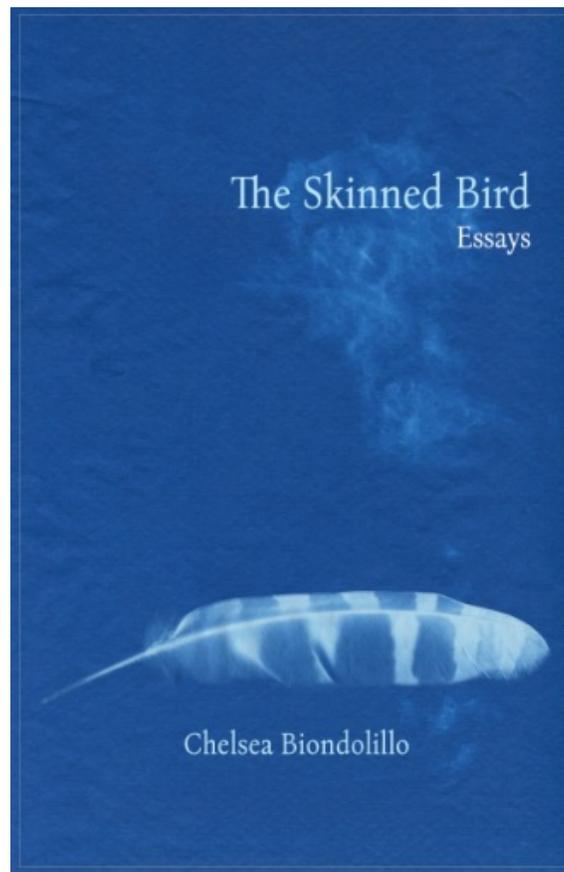
[kernpunktpress@gmail.com](mailto:kernpunktpress@gmail.com)

ON SALE: MAY 1, 2019

# THE SKINNED BIRD

Essays

Chelsea Biondolillo



Pub Date:	5/1/2019	Product No.:	9781732325111
Publisher:	<a href="#">KERNPUNKT Press</a>	ISBN	978-1-73232-511-1
Binding:	PAPERBACK	Pages:	165
MSRP:	\$14.99	Distributed:	SPD

### Advanced praise for *The Skinned Bird*

“Sometimes when a human is truly an animal, their thinking patterns shift in fundamental ways, absorbing the color here and the systems within systems, to the point where they feel alienated from humans and the human part of themselves. The ache and dizziness of pulling back into an integrated body and psychology is a story only a few of us can tell. Luckily, Chelsea is here to walk us through that process with no apology, only reverence.” – Kristin Hersh, musician and author of *Rat Girl*

“Birds fill this book. But *The Skinned Bird* is also full of music, silence, rain, deserts and desertion. Chelsea Biondolillo shows us through science, memory, an updraft of questioning, and a flicker of answers how we learn and relearn how to sing. Like the space feathers need between them, Biondolillo gives us the space inside these essays for the air to flow and lift. Don’t worry if there is a pause. Biondolillo will stitch you in. *The Skinned Bird* is a brilliant dive into how deeply we can love people and place and dirt and birds and air. And how we sometimes have to let go of all of that to truly fly.” – Nicole Walker, *Sustainability: A Love Story*

#### **About the book**

From award-winning essayist Chelsea Biondolillo, *THE SKINNED BIRD* is about all the ways we break our own hearts. In lyric, fragmented essays—full of geological, ornithological and photographic interventions, with landscapes, loss, and longing—Biondolillo travels the terrain of leaving and finding home while keeping her sights fixed firm on the natural world around her.

Includes "How to Skin a Bird," winner of the Carter Prize for the Essay, and the *Best American Essays 2014* notable, "Phrenology." Plus, essays previously published in *Brevity*, *Passages North*, *New Ohio Review*, *Sonora Review*, and others along with several new essays and mixed media works.

#### **About the author**

Chelsea Biondolillo is the author of two prose chapbooks, *Ologies* and *#Lovesong*. Her work has been collected in *Best American Science and Nature Writing 2016*, *Waveform: Twenty-first Century Essays by Women*, and *How We Speak To One Another: An Essay Daily Reader*, among others. She is a former Olive B. O'Connor fellow at Colgate University, and her work has been supported by Oregon Literary Arts, Wyoming Arts Council and the Consortium for Science and Policy Outcomes/NSF. She has a BFA in photography from Pacific NW College of Art and an MFA in creative writing/environmental studies from the University of Wyoming. She lives and works outside of her hometown, Portland, Oregon.

[www.roamingcowgirl.com](http://www.roamingcowgirl.com) | Twitter: @c\_biondolillo | Instagram: @cdbiondolillo



### Excerpt

Song birds, or oscine Passeriformes, with fixed song repertoires learn to sing in four steps. The steps are studied, in part, because many linguists believe that these same four steps describe human language acquisition.

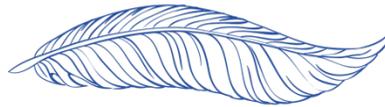
The first step in song acquisition is called the critical learning period. This is when chicks begin to recognize their parents' voices along with neighbors of the same species, and they differentiate between those voices and other sounds.

\*

My parents were married for three years before I was born, and they lived together for almost three years after. The shape and sound of their love is unknown to me. I have no idea how he courted her or when the courting became something else. I do not remember the words they spoke to each other in the days and months while I lay in my crib, listening.

I know what my mother said to me and what I said back. These are stories I've heard often. Before I could talk, I had night terrors, she tells me. I would scream inconsolably in my sleep. The pediatrician said this was normal for some babies.

She tells me about the day I choked on bottle milk while lying in my crib, and how the sound of it sent her running to me; how afterwards, I would choke and gag whenever I wanted her to pick me up. It was a sound she could never ignore, she says, eyes squinted theatrically at the memory of my manipulation. I would stand in my crib and yell (so early! so advanced!) MOM. MOM. MOM. MOM. And then one day, after a moment, DARLENE. I wonder, now, if I sounded like my father when I said it.



### Praise for *#Lovesong* (Etchings Press, 2016)

"#Lovesong is deeply lyrical work; a collage of photographs, found text, and micro-essay that explores love and loss in the inimitable voice of Chelsea Biondolillo, whose writing is always somehow both wry and tender."

– Sarah Einstein, *Mot*

### Praise for *Ologies* (Etchings Press, 2015)

"Biondolillo's collection lacerates several human veins—gendered bodies, personal histories, scientific legacies—with a forceful & fearful precision. *Ologies* offers a pleasingly gruesome and vitally intimate dissection of the relationship between women, family, and the natural world. These are lyric essays of the sharpest order: astute, penetrating, incandescent."

– Will Slattery, managing editor *Essay Daily*

"I've always been mesmerized by Chelsea Biondolillo's ability to braid scientific data and observations with such longing, with such a vulnerable self. Here she creates a "taxonomy for all [her] dark fascinations," inviting the reader not to turn away, but to stare, to linger in "how things were unmade." These essays showcase the scalpel-like precision of her language along with her skills in setting disparate texts in conversation. "I wanted to understand something larger from the seeing," she writes, which is exactly what these essays achieve through the lens of Biondolillo's mind. Maybe the simplest way to say it is this: I'm a big fan."

– Jill Talbot, *The Way We Weren't: A Memoir*