

Title: The Poetry of Birding

Instructor: Priyanka Kumar

Dates: May 2-6, 2024

Arrival: May 2, 2024

Departure: May 6, 2024

Skill Level: All skill levels

Mobility Level: Easy Mobility for field trips

Materials List: Binoculars, Notebooks

Workshop Description:

Through guided birding excursions to observe migratory birds in the Summer Lake Wildlife Area, bring your observations back to meditative discussions in our workshop circle. Here, we will integrate birds and poetry, beginning with Seamus Heaney's "St. Kevin and the Blackbird," and travel back through the ages to the lone hut of the master of Chinese nature poetry. Participants will create and workshop nature poems of their own.

Agenda + Meals

- Day 1: Thursday, May 2: 2:00-5:00 pm Arrival | Evening presentation on migratory bird patterns + PLAYA bird walk
- Day 2: Friday, May 3: Morning Birding Field Excursion | Afternoon Introduction to Nature Poetry, and its varied traditions | Participants begin considering the subject of their poem.
- Day 3: Saturday, May 4: Birding Field Excursion | Discussion: Holding the Landscape and Crafting first poem draft
- Day 4: Sunday, May 5: Morning Considering Nature Poems in the Modern Tradition | Participants work on a revised draft of their poem | **Group dinner provided by PLAYA + presentation of polished poems, followed by constructive critique**
- Day 5: Monday, May 6: Depart by noon

Bio: [PRIYANKA KUMAR](#) is the nationally-acclaimed naturalist and author of [Conversations with Birds](#), praised as “a landmark book” that “could help people around the world rewild their hearts and souls” (*Psychology Today*). *Conversations with Birds* is a finalist for the 2023 CLMP Firecracker Award for a book that makes a significant contribution to our literary culture. Kumar’s essays and criticism appear in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Orion*, and *The Rumpus*. Her work has been featured on CBS News Radio, *Yale Climate Connections*, and *Oprah Daily*.

She is a recipient of an Aldo & Estella Leopold Writing Residency, an Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Award, a New Mexico/New Visions Governor's Award, a Canada Council for the Arts Grant, and an Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences Fellowship. Kumar holds an MFA from the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts and is an alumna of the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference. She has taught at the University of Southern California, the University of California Santa Cruz, and has given keynote addresses and workshops across the country from Los Angeles to Tucson to Alaska. Kumar wrote, directed, and produced the feature documentary *The Song of the Little Road*, starring Martin Scorsese and Ravi Shankar.

Photos: <https://playasummerlake.org/priyanka-kumar/>