

Words on the Wind

A celebration of birds in literature

Acts of Spring

By Janet Ruth

*Sky above the Río Grande,
above the Sandias,
stretches pale cerulean,
thin mares' tail clouds
gallop in from the west—
omens of change.*

*Cochiti Dam has paroled
imprisoned water
to make room for snowmelt.
The river runs bank-full.*

*Cottonwood and New Mexico olive leaves
clothe winter's bony fingers
in lacy green gloves.*

*Beneath this arc of change,
I stand among last year's rustling
dead leaves and fallen twigs,
strain to hear a whisper,
to see a sign.*

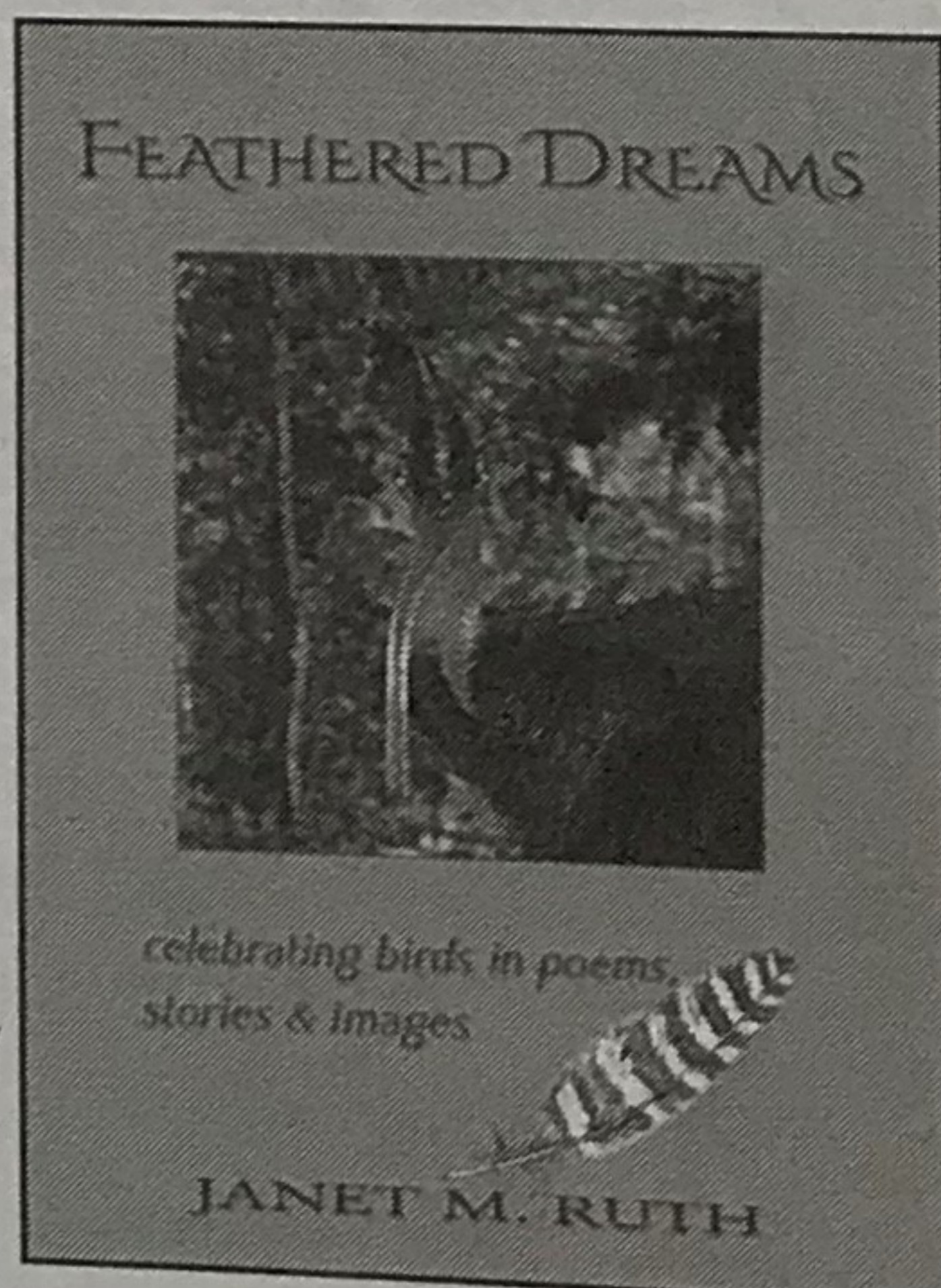
*Bubbling from the silence,
a saucy whistle, syncopation,
clattering CHACK! CHACK!
from a feathered sprite.
I twist and pry, peer and peek
through foliage—
nothing.*

*Completely still,
the chatter mocks me.
My eyes in a fine frenzy rolling,*
ready to give up,
I am at last rewarded with a glimpse—
Puck, in yellow and white robes,
launches on olive wings
into the heavens with a wink,
then plummets free,
back into the thicket—
yellow-breasted chat has returned.*

Reprinted by permission of the author—
from her new book *Feathered Dreams:
celebrating birds in poems, stories &
images*—available from Amazon.com.

Editor's note: Art and science belong
together. Janet Ruth is a, poet, artist, and
ornithologist. She relies beautifully on her
scientist's eye and artist's heart to recre-
ate the magic encountered when we stop
to watch and listen to nature.

**from A Midsummer Night's Dream by
William Shakespeare*



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