

## Oriole Report

*Meg Kearney*

Orioles “often use man-made materials for their nests, so the ornithologist Alexander Wilson warned women to keep ‘narrowly watching their thread that may chance to be out bleaching.’”

—from *100 Birds and How They Got Their Names*

To build their nest they stole my mother’s cigarettes.  
Next they snagged her booze. They took her heating pads and measuring cups. Plucked her blood-soaked tissues, bright as carnations, from the waste basket; they took her shopping list, zip-up boots, Katrina the cat, feeding tube. Her glasses and the book on her lap. Filched her Sweet Dreams Tea, her *Field Guide to Birds*. It wasn’t all in this order, but they stole her Easter wreath, the tumor in her throat, ironing board, perfect penmanship, black-silk slip, her late-night bowl of ice cream & Cool Whip. They tried to take her last words, but she snatched those back, took those with her.