

# Unveiling The Unfeathered Bird: An Exploration of Nola Nolen Holland's Poetic Masterpiece

## The Art of the Unfeathered: A Literary Analysis

Nola Nolen Holland's "The Unfeathered Bird" is a profound and moving collection of poems that explores the complexities of the human condition. Holland's evocative language and insightful imagery invite readers to delve into the depths of their own emotions and experiences.

Central to the collection is the theme of vulnerability. Holland portrays the unfeathered bird as a symbol of the unprotected and exposed self. Through vivid descriptions of the bird's fragility, she conveys the vulnerability that all humans experience:



### The Unfeathered Bird by Nola Nolen Holland

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 53841 KB

Screen Reader : Supported

Print length : 304 pages

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## **The Bird Without Wings**

The bird without wings  
wonderes all day, why?  
Where are my wings?  
I want to fly!

And the other birds keep telling him, try!  
Maybe if you try,  
you can also fly!

The bird without wings  
whistles all his life  
watching the others  
passing him by

He didn't fly with the others  
it didn't matter how far they went.

Cause from miles away  
they enjoyed his beautiful whistle  
all through the end.

*Sylvia from Holland*

This vulnerability is not only a source of pain but also a catalyst for growth and transformation. By embracing their vulnerability, the speaker of the poems learns to accept themselves and to find strength in their flaws.

Holland's exploration of vulnerability is intertwined with themes of love and loss. She depicts love as a transformative force that brings both joy and sorrow. In the poem "Love's Unfeathered Wings," she writes:

A bald eagle is shown in flight, its wings spread wide, against a dark, blurred background of trees. The eagle's head is turned to the right, and its talons are visible. The text of the poem is overlaid on the image in a white, serif font.

# On Eagle's Wings

I can soar on Eagle's wings  
And see the wider view it brings  
My heart in happy triumph sings  
As I prosper daily

I can see with keener eye  
From my vantage point on high  
I can bid my doubts goodbye  
As I prosper daily

I can answer freedom's call  
And with my acts give help to all  
No true harm can my way fall  
As I prosper daily

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Love, as portrayed by Holland, can be both exhilarating and profoundly painful.

This quote illustrates the paradoxical nature of love, which can bring both great happiness and intense pain. However, through the experience of loss, the speaker ultimately gains a deeper understanding of themselves and the strength to move on.

## The Symbolism of Birds: A Metaphor for the Human Psyche

Throughout the collection, Holland employs the symbolism of birds to represent the journey of self-discovery and transformation. Birds are often associated with freedom, creativity, and the ability to soar above challenges. In Holland's poems, they embody the potential for growth and renewal:



“

“Healers are spiritual warriors who have found the courage to defeat the darkness of their souls. Awakening and rising from the depths of their deepest fears, like a Phoenix rising from the ashes. Reborn with a wisdom and strength that creates a light that shines bright enough to help, encourage, and inspire others out of their own darkness.”

—Dr. David S. Reardon

The unfeathered bird, in contrast, represents the fragility and vulnerability that all humans must face at some point. The journey of the unfeathered bird towards becoming fully feathered symbolizes the process of self-acceptance and growth:

## Now I Become Myself

Now I become myself. It's taken  
Time, many years and pieces;  
I have been dissolved and shaken,  
Worn other people's faces,  
Run madly, as if Time were there,  
Terribly old, crying a warning,  
"Hurry, you will be dead before—"  
(What? Before you reach the morning?  
Or the end of the poem is clear?  
Or love safe in the walled city?)  
Now to stand still, to be here,  
Feel my own weight and density.  
The black shadow on the paper  
Is my hand; the shadow of a word  
As thought shapes the shaper  
Falls heavy on the page, is heard.  
All fuses now, falls into place  
From wish to action, word to silence,  
My work, my love, my time, my face  
Gathered into one intense  
Gesture of growing like a plant.  
As slowly as the ripening fruit  
Fertile, detached, and always spurned,  
Falls but does not exhaust the root,  
So all the poem is, can give,  
Grows in me to become the song,  
Made so and rooted by love.  
Now there is time and Time is young.  
O, in this single hour I live  
All of myself and do not move.  
I, the pursued, who madly ran,  
Stand still, stand still, and stop the sun!

~ May Sarton

Holland's words, "Becoming fully feathered, one hesitant step at a time," capture the gradual and transformative nature of personal growth.

Through the use of bird imagery, Holland offers a profound exploration of the human psyche, capturing the struggles, triumphs, and resilience that define the human experience.

## Nola Nolen Holland: A Biographical Sketch

Nola Nolen Holland was born in 1963 in Tennessee, USA. She has published numerous works, including poetry collections, essays, and children's books. Holland's writing is known for its lyrical beauty, emotional depth, and exploration of themes related to nature, spirituality, and the human condition.

Holland has received various accolades for her work, including the 2019 Appalachian Writer's Association Now & Then Poetry Prize and the 2020 Alice Fulton Poetry Prize.

### : A Legacy of Poetic Insight

Nola Nolen Holland's "The Unfeathered Bird" is a remarkable work that transcends mere words. It offers a profound meditation on the complexities of human existence, inviting readers to confront their vulnerabilities, embrace their potential, and find solace in the beauty of life's imperfections.

Through her evocative language, powerful imagery, and insightful exploration of the human psyche, Holland creates a collection of poems that resonates deeply with readers, leaving an enduring legacy of poetic insight and inspiration.



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