

Memory **Nancy Overcott**

Some say it's out there in the trees
one hundred years of memory
inside I dreamed I forgot

my name and telephone number
outside the woodpecker enters the tree
slams her head in obedience

to memory builds a nest
to hold the chick who remembers its way
into the world outside the egg

right here—now—I remember my name
inside your mouth. A nuthatch calls a
nuthatch (he never forgets)

here the length of day reminds the monarch
when and where to fly—
one hundred years of memory fit inside

one butterfly, inside one thousand, but I have
no memory to point the way, no
red and black wings to carry me south.

NANCY OVERCOTT graduated from the University of Minnesota with a bachelor's degree in education and then taught German and French. Later, she graduated from Rochester (Minnesota) Community and Technical College with an associate degree in nursing, then worked as a registered nurse at Methodist Hospital in Rochester. Her life in the Big Woods of southeast Minnesota has inspired poems that have been published in *ArtWord Quarterly*, *Mankato Poetry Review*, *Minnesota Birding*, *Minnesota Poetry Calendar*, *North Coast Review*, *Sidewalks*, *Trapeze*, *Valley Voice*, and *Wolf Head Quarterly*. She is the author of three books: *At Home in the Big Woods* (Taxon Media, 2002); *Fifty Common Birds of the Upper Midwest* (University of Iowa Press, 2006); and *Fifty Uncommon Birds of the Upper Midwest* (University of Iowa Press, 2007).