Feathered friends

A Collection of Small Birds With Meaningful Stories

By Carla Elizabeth

Feathered friends

This collection is dedicated to everyone navigating difficult journeys, however big or small, and to those who walk beside them.

May these birds bring moments of comfort, encouragement, perspective and quiet strength.

With much love

Carla x

Every bird tells a story

The *Feathered Friends* collection began as a small creative distraction during breast cancer treatment.

I started drawing a kingfisher during my first chemotherapy session as a way to relax and occupy my mind. It proved hugely comforting, so I decided to keep going, and before long it began to grow into something much more meaningful.

Birds have always quietly been a joy in my life. Watching them hop around the garden, spotting them whilst exploring places like Minsmere, or appearing unexpectedly on a walk – they bring moments of calm and create a gentle connection with nature.

As the drawings progressed, each bird began to take on its own theme:

- Hope
- Determination
- Grace
- Community
- Remembrance
- Adaptation

The birds became small reminders of hope, resilience, and the quiet comfort found in nature.

THE KINGFISHER

A flash of hope

A kingfisher is
rarely seen for long.

One moment, the riverbank
is still, and the next, a streak of
turquoise flashes across the water
before disappearing again.

You might wonder if you imagined it.

But if you're lucky, the bird settles
on a branch nearby, perfectly still,
as if it had been there all along.

Hope can feel a little like that.

It doesn't always stay for long,
but when it appears, it has the
power to brighten everything
around it.

THE WOODPECKER

Pure determination

Walk through some trees and you may hear a woodpecker even if you can't see it.

The steady tapping echoes through the woods as the bird works patiently at the bark.

Tap by tap.

It is not hurried or dramatic, but it is incredibly persistent.

Sometimes progress in life looks very similar.

Small steps, repeated again and again, eventually lead to the reward.

THE AVOCET

Grace in changing tides

With its striking black and white feathers and gently curved bill, the avocet is one of the most elegant birds along the Suffolk coast.

It moves through shallow water with calm precision, sweeping its bill from side to side in search of food.

Watching an avocet is mesmerising and peaceful.

Even when the wind lifts and the tide changes, this majestic bird continues its slow, steady movements.

A quiet reminder that grace can exist even during uncertain times.

LONG-TAILED TITS

The comfort of company

Long-tailed tits don't
seem to like travelling alone.

They move through hedgerows
in lively little flocks, chattering
and bouncing from branch
to branch together.

If you spot one, there are usually
several more close behind.

Their constant companionship
is part of what helps them thrive.

Some journeys are simply
easier when we don't
face them alone.

THE ROBIN

A gentle reminder

Robins often seem to appear exactly when you need them.

A small red chest on a fence post, a quiet presence in the garden, or a curious visitor following you as you work outdoors.

They have long been associated with remembrance and comfort.

Whether that is folklore or coincidence, their appearance often feels timely and oddly reassuring.

A gentle reminder to pause, notice the small moments, and hold close the memories that matter.

THE NUTHATCH

Finding another way

Nuthatches move through trees in ways that seem almost impossible.

Unlike most birds, they climb both up and down trunks with ease, often travelling head-first as they search for hidden food.

It is an unusual way of moving through the world, but for the nuthatch, it works perfectly.

Nature is full of creatures that succeed not by following the obvious path, but by finding another way.

Feathered Friends

Supporting Others

Whilst creating the *Feathered Friends* collection, I became increasingly aware of the many people and organisations who offer care and support to those facing cancer.

Inspired by my own experience, this collection became a way for me to turn something difficult into something positive. Through it, I make personal donations to support organisations that provide comfort, encouragement and practical help to people navigating challenging journeys.

Their work reflects many of the same themes found within these birds – hope, resilience, kindness and community.

Why Birds?
How it all began

Looking around my home, it's clear that birds have quietly surrounded my life for many years – sculptures, fabrics, drawings and paintings.

Strangely, I didn't fully notice this until I was well into creating the *Feathered Friends* collection.

My husband first introduced me to birdwatching in 2017. Keen to impress, I confidently identified a large white bird in a field… as a swan. It turned out to be a goose – a slightly embarrassing start, but thankfully, my bird identification has improved since then.

After a career in graphic design, I returned to painting in 2022 and began developing my own style, particularly inspired by the wildlife and landscapes of Suffolk.

Being diagnosed with breast cancer meant I had to slow down and spend time on recovery and being creative was a massive part of that. Slowly but surely, the *Feathered Friends* project came together. I could not be more proud, and I hope it spreads some positivity and joy to others.

Small Birds
Gentle Reminders
Quiet Moments

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