



This tiny, indigenous species  
was there in 1788  
when soldiers and convicts  
landed at Botany Bay—  
among the penal colonies.  
Perhaps a convict stopped  
to listen to their song,  
like the fisherman  
in Andersen's 'The Nightingale'?

**AUSSIE FINCHES**

The male finch worries  
a striped millet stem  
into the woven bamboo nest  
and tucks in cotton tufts.  
The mate, tiny feet clasping  
the bare wooden perch,  
watches, waits to lay  
a clutch of tiny eggs.  
Nearby, juveniles—  
newly rejected—flutter  
against the wires  
of their new cage.

**CAGED**

From jellybean-sized eggs,  
the hatchlings emerge as  
flesh and down. No mouth  
apparent, no eyes open.  
Hours later, teardrop-shapes  
mark corners of beaks.  
The parents gorge on millet  
and begin a delicate plunge  
into open mouths  
that soon will scold  
demands for food.

**IDENTITY**

The male hops  
onto the hip of the dish,  
dips his red beak into  
clear water.  
Did he send a signal?  
The mate hops  
into the dish, shudders  
and shakes to fling water onto feathers.  
Back on the perch  
preening begins,  
and the male enters the water.

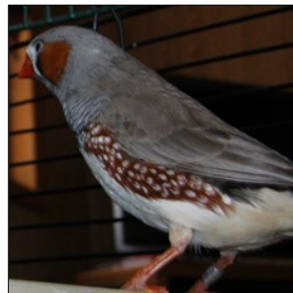
**BATHING**

*Please recycle to a friend!*

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Cover Photo: Ken Brown

**I WOULD NEVER  
ANTHROPOMORPHIZE  
MY FINCHES**



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**ANTHROPOMORPHIZE**

To attribute human form or personality to



**OBSERVING MANNERS**

I would never anthropomorphize, but  
I see my zebra finches  
display etiquette toward each other,  
bathing and nest-building.  
Yet when I complain about their mess,  
they cock their heads at me  
and boldly scratch and toss  
seeds with wild abandon.

**Origami Poetry Project™**

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MY FINCHES**

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