

2016

Ten Things I Know as of Thursday, January 21st, 2016 at 8:02 pm

Jake Crouse

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2016 Creative Non-Fiction Editor's Choice Award

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by Jake Crouse

- 1) Birds are more enjoyable to watch than they are to make into numbers. Numbers are static — no field markings, migratory patterns, summer trills, or winter chirps.
- 2) The first human was endowed with the ability to fear. Our species survived on the proper balance of trust and intimidation.
- 3) Most Americans can't say the country Mogadishu is situated in; many of those same people can only hypothesize which continent it lies on.
- 4) Epidemiologists study large groups of people at a time. Some in the field refer to themselves as “number watchers.”
- 5) Birds are generally aware of when to leave an area. Triggers include temperature changes, resource availability, and concentration of predators.
- 6) Fear elicits a number of unfavorable responses in the human body, including sweat gland stimulation, increased heart rate and adrenaline uptake, and shunting of blood to the large legs muscle for explosive speed production. “People also searched the terms: stress, anxiety, panic.”
- 7) The bodies are being counted in Mogadishu as I write. “This is a developing story.”
- 8) I have yet to meet an epidemiologist who prefers to substitute numbers for people.
- 9) A variety of birds (e.g. sparrows, vireos, thrushes) will respond to alert calls, regardless of if they see a predator or not.
- 10) The only humans we will hear of tonight in Mogadishu will be numbers. No names, no stories, no word on if they knew they were supposed to run.