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Obscure Mist Walkabout

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chuck-will's-widow**family: Caprimulgidae**

crepuscular bird that is solitary, except after nesting and when migrating; builds no nest structure; distinctive, repetitive melancholy call; graceful, buoyant flight

Pushing aside beginner spelling and grammar books, I hover over a thin, leather-bound ledger. Squint in candlelight, the columns never adding up to my expectations. John says he'll earn his way as long as he can hold a piece of chalk to drawing paper. But his dream—a book of American birds—has yet to take flight.

So he makes promises. While I struggle. For most of our married life, I've lived in someone else's home. In this old overseer's cabin, I am governess and mother, forced to haggle with planters whose children attend my school. Yet even in dwindling light, I clutch hope and smother my worries—shadow-birds, unrecognized by John, that flicker and flit as great-winged creatures.

**OBSCURE MIST** JULIE COVINGTON**WALKABOUT** JULIE COVINGTON