

Mockingbird

By Hailey Leithauser

No other song
 or swoop (part
 quiver, part swivel and
 plash) with
tour de force
stray the course note
 liquefactions
 (its new,
bawdy air an
 aria hangs in) en-
thralls,
 trills, loops, soars,
 startles, out-warbles,
out-brawns, more
 juicily,
 lifts up
the dawn, outlaws from
 sackcloth, the cool
sloth of bed sheets,
 from pillows
 and silks
 and blue-quilted, feminine
bolsters, fusses
 of coverlets;
 nips as the switch
of a juvenile willow, fuzz
 of a nettle, to
window and window
 and window and ever
 toward egress, to
 flurry, pollen
and petal shed,
 to wet street
and wet pavement,
 all sentiment intemperate,
all sentience
 ephemeral.

Source: *Poetry* (November 2012)



Hailey Leithauser originally took poetry workshops as an undergraduate at the University of Maryland, but stopped writing for almost 20 years while she pursued a career as a librarian. Standing in front of a van Gogh painting during a visit to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., she was inspired to return to writing, and eventually developed her own form, the small sonnet. Writing dense, compact poems packed with slant and full rhymes has taught Leithauser “to really exploit what you can do in a poem that is only 70 syllables long and that relies on rhyme to really carry it through,” she told the Takoma Voice in an interview. Born in Florida, Leithauser lives in Takoma Park, Maryland.