Nesting
By Molly Prosser

She thinks about the puffins hidden in the clutches of the black cliffs outside Reykjavik, huddled, alighting for haddock or herring as soft-spoken, thick-bearded men in their blinds cast nets to catch them, trap them, midflight. They swallowed the chum from schooners, the plankton spewed from humpback feasts, gorging themselves until they were too fat to fly back to the volcanic shore and feed their hungry chicks.

She considers the killdeer faking a broken wing, protecting her nest from poachers, cooing and limping around her pile of rocks to distract her attackers, eggs rocking slightly in the stones at the edge of the cracked parking lot. The raccoons are close, sick of dumpster scraps, craving the crack of speckled shells, the thick, golden yolk.

She opens her right hand, spreads her fingers apart and remembers how the Bantams’ thin necks would fit in the spaces, and how she would curl her hand around their soft, honey-colored heads, her thumb stroking their beaks, the feathers between their eyes, calming them, loving them, getting them ready for the sharp twist of the wrist.