**Night of the Origami**

Sam Barbee

This creature I create resembles nothing

snorting in any zoo; no museum skeleton re-assembled,

foreboding, empty eye sockets evaluating me as delicacy.

I never studied it in a textbook or heard it

screech through an episode of *Animal Planet*,

*Ripley’s Believe It or Not*, or *Missing Link Uncovered*.

I distinguish little wing-lets, little feet-lets, a tail to pin prey,

claws to shred fur, serrated beak to pick and peel flesh,

gouge innards; and, worst of all, golden eyes cajoling

*trust me through this*.

Yet, disbelieving kind reassurance, I unfold it, my palm pressing

the carcass across an aggregate counter, fearful my beast could prove omen,

a miscreation capable of who knows what. . . .

Fingers grope. I clamp its least-lethal edge, thumb flattening tail-scales,

and hold it up to my brightest lights, but, smoothed, it hovers,

anxious embryo. Saddened, I shiver knowing I will never be fulfilled.

I witness it, even with inbred and inconceivable dreads, as an innocent −

no more than a deflated beach ball, primary colors unable to spin in simple sun,

never combusting any spectra of pigment − now a rouge of wrinkles, like a punctured dream.