



Collage: "Metamorphosis 2" by Thomas Terceira. "To Lose and Catch the Trail" was written by Claire Kruesel for *Rattle's* Ekphrastic Challenge, March 2016, and selected by Terceira as the Artist's Choice winner.

To Lose and Catch the Trail

BY CLAIRE KRUESEL

Is it my job to flee, or yours to chase;
mine to constrict,
or yours to expand—like water

The first highway rivers:
boats in summer;
sleighs in winter

Water solidifies by growing apart
wings catch sky
between hooklets of feathers

Overlapping scales, articulated joints
Dipladenia opens
a carmine-red star

Lipstick, that animal color
my mother warns not to butcher the bird
or I will lose taste for flesh

(little deaths)
I cannot resist
origins, mechanisms, bound wings

Look how close we are
all the atoms
between us

A wave crests: down is both ways
and each feather
has two vanes

He bands my wrists; I buck up
water resisting
its unthawing—

Ancestors' protests—muffled
by years, dirt
ochre'd hand

I would like to interview
the grasp
this dark corner

Or bleach myself in the window, anything
to finally evict
this spirit from the body.

