Bird’s Eye

She puts on the yellow gloves and waits for the starlings to leave.

From the kitchen exhaust she pulls the cramped nest along with the newly hatched and, wearing my father’s galoshes, stomps everything into the sidewalk.

She tells me no pity, says they do not belong here. Nor do I, eight, seeing this.

When the birds return they bring a plague of small red bugs. We debate their name while she cocks her head, holds the can of poison in her gloved hand.

The dream comes later, and in it we do not pick their feathers from the yard when they begin to fall, when they begin to heap softly in the corners of the fenced yard, when they pile around the swing set, the sandbox, the rhubarb. She says, they carry disease, she says.

Poet Amanda Warren is a displaced Appalachian whose poems have appeared in Diner, Crazyhorse, Lit and elsewhere. She currently works at Western Michigan University. This poem originally appeared as “Murmuration” in pacificREVIEW. Artist Kate Baird, a native of Springfield, MO, now lives in Brooklyn where she paints and reads as much as possible.