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## Imitation

Kathryn M. Rogers  
*Community college of City University*

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## Imitation

Father carved birds  
on the back step.  
I often found him there,  
painting plumage  
with insistent accuracy.

From his spot  
I threw my pet starling  
in the air. Every day  
he was at work  
the baby bird flapped  
a few inches higher,  
fluff, wisps of  
dandelion on the  
breeze until  
wind combed out  
feathers and  
it flew.

I called.

It ambled back

among the purple clover,

opened its

yellow clown beak

for a blender-chewed worm.

That day I would

not push the hand-mower,

again refuse to

behead buttercups.

I stood in the kitchen

by the back door

while father

read his nature

guide on the step,

mouthed names:

*White-throat sparrow,*

*House finch, Mocking*

*bird.*

On weekends after breakfast

*Turd* – *bird* shook his  
shoe box, poked  
beak through air holes  
in the lid. Father hated  
him airborne  
in the house. I *did* wash  
the blender clean,  
churned foam worthy  
of the Falls  
while father's blade  
whittled a starling  
from a painting by Peterson.

Where was the verdigris  
sheen of a head bobbing  
after bugs? And the  
flight feathers gilded by light?  
The wood was too heavy  
to ever fly.

I wandered alone  
to the ravine, in search  
of a bush fire  
lit by the male cardinal  
at dusk.

Back out at dawn  
before father  
came downstairs,  
I watched  
the sun free its red bird  
from a tree.

**KATE ROGERS'** most recent poetry collection, *Foreign Skin* (Aeolus House), debuted in Toronto and Hong Kong in 2015. Her poetry has appeared in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Canada, the U.S., Malaysia, Japan and the UK in the following anthologies and literary magazines: *The Guardian*; *Contemporary Verse 2*; *Orbis International*; *Eastlit*; *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*; *Kyoto Journal*; *More!*; *Asia Literary Review*; *Seek It*; *Crave It* and *Many Mountains Moving*. Kate is co-editor of *OutLoud Too* (MCCM), the second anthology of OutLoud – Hong Kong's longest running English language poetry collective. She is also co-editor of the women's poetry anthology *Not A Muse: the inner lives of women* (Haven). *Not A Muse* launched at literary festivals in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia; Hong Kong and Toronto, and at the 2010 American Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) Conference in Denver, Colorado.

Originally from Toronto, Kate Rogers lectures in Literature and Media Studies at the Community College of City University, Hong Kong. Kate is a member of the League of Canadian Poets.