

Adam Crothers

Cockatrice

It clucked, and spat at the best of both worlds.
The monster hatched by a mother-serpent
from an egg laid by a too-proud rooster
twisted copper about a girl's wrists, her
ankles, her throat. It squatted, watched her, penned
a tribute with a claw pisswet, bloodwhorled,

and badinaged with her would-be saviour
and caught his eye and struck him blind and dead.
A winged beast can be so underhanded;
its pupils were graves dug amid sapphires. . .

Of course its parents were disappointed
but still loved it. To test them it painted
over their scales or feathers as they slept
and rolled them howling down a rocky slope.