

Self-Directed Study

There is a prepubescent rooster
working hard beneath my window
to find the pure iambic pride
of his ironhearted crow.
Every day at eight a.m.,
and then again at ten,
I hear his lame-limp rhythms—
"Shaky, at best!" the reviews
would say. But who reviews
things born of homegrown orchards?
The only audience: apples.
And even the attention
of cultivated fruit
sways in the instance
of October wind. Still,
he forges on, my
self-sequestered chum,
and as the crackle of his doodle
grates against his cock-a-doo,
I shift,
un-numb my leg
and lift my pen,
again...the bracing airwaves
our shared decree until
I feel a chill, close the window, make the bed,
pour more coffee, all the while
outside in the dirt down below...mistakes
attempts mistakes attempts attempts
mistakes attempts... *Voilà!*—
November.
Snowfall.

Somewhere
in the orchard

a voice ripens.