

**JEANINE HATHAWAY**

**A Long Engagement**

Tickbird sits in Rhino's ear: *trik-quiss*, her hiss  
and crackling sets his very horns on edge. She plucks  
and crushes ticks, then sips the opened wound,  
beak pressed to blood, blood the better food.  
But what symbiosis is utterly benign? Who  
wants myth's arrangement falsified by fact?