The Long-Whiskered Owlet
   (Xenoglaux loweryi)
By Jeredith Merrin

If “Hope is the thing with feathers,”
what could be more hopeful
than this minute Peruvian owl:
superadded feathers

worn as a kind of half-mask (the
Carnival-of-Venice
Columbina)—lacy plumes framing
eyes of somber amber?

What hope, though, for the bird, whose name
means strange? In cloud-forest
disappearing, it’s disappearing,
short-tailed and stubby-winged,

five inches high, human-heart sized.
Strange—even in the old,
hope beats with the same strong beat: to taste
something else, to see more,

to do what you once thought you might,
and to wake where you’re loved.

Published in OWLING (West Hartford: Grayson Press, 2016).

“Bat Ode,” which I think must also be on your list, or should be—read it at the MM
Conference, is syllabic, and about at bat!— is from Bat Ode: Chicago: The University