

## Why else

by [Capers Limehouse](#) in the [November 16, 2010](#) issue

It may be that we are the mockingbirds  
of the universe.

No bee studies to imitate  
the bower bird and build  
postmodern hives of sticks and debris,

no bear hibernates in a tree  
on a platform of bent branches,  
exploring the experience of gorillas,

no walking  
or crawling creature spends its life desperate  
to build wings;

no other creature here sees  
a meteor streak across space and thinks—  
I could do that.

Or watches army ants destroy everything in their path and forms ranks.

Or maybe we are this small locus of the universe  
watching itself,  
thinking itself through.

Why else would some of us study ancient stone

bones our whole lives,  
arguing passionately

over how they ran,  
what kind of mothers they were,  
how anything that size had sex,

much less the frozen moons  
of far distant planets

where nothing  
will ever buy or sell us anything;

why else the Sistine Chapel,  
or *Guernica*, why else poems, why else prayers,  
why else words at all?