

THE HUNTSMAN'S CASE AGAINST GIRLS

Girls are defeated too easily
by thickets and forests, shadowy
spaces that close ranks around them.
To boys, the backwoods are layered
places of revelation, a story read
through tracks and untouched scat.

Boys understand the dance of hunter
and hunted: how, when a rabbit's moving
fast and front feet are fulcrums for hopping,
less of the hind leg lands on the ground,
yielding shorter prints, as if already divided
on hearing the whistle of hawk high above.

In the forest, it's not a sin of omission
to forsake a sweet girl used to the swirl
of fancy-dress balls or embroidery
sessions. Even teaching her tracking
won't save her from destiny's
dark-hearted designs.