

ADRIFT IN THE FOREST

The dark suddenly deeper,
farther into the forest
where leaves no longer
look like flimsy hearts,

where the footpath recedes,
subtracting by half-shades,
lavender into blackness.
As the girl tramps faster,

she hears the dead
pronounce her name.
The sound takes on
its own furious shapes.

She scurries past
their callous presence,
tripping over exposed roots
that snake across her trail.

As the noisy night tries
to wrap itself around her,
she crawls between arched
arms of two gnarled tree roots.

Her back to the bald place
at the base of a broad oak,
she presses her stained face
into her palms and rolls

into a small, tenuous knot,
hoping nothing fiercer
than dreamless sleep
will find her.