

BEFORE A POET KNOWS WHAT SHE IS

Eyes wild and light as a puma's,  
breast-buds flowered plump, up-tilted to summer,  
opal and nectarine heraldry of Erato in jeans.

Graduation brought three marriage pleas,  
bottled forest smells, soft wool and leather  
always close, mouths and arms she liked.  
New sums to sift at the deep waking.

The suitors spoke hoarsely of apartments  
and TV, beds, money, children.  
And two promised a car of her own.  
She ran alone to wrap night around her.

Without secret pages,  
too unsure to say how warlock winds  
hurried her blood, how river tongues rhymed  
with hers and promised more. Too new  
to tell how strings and reeds in minor keys  
leaned her on shoulders of granite,  
closed her eyes with pine breath  
while wilderness sinew held her closer.

And her unnamed babies  
already lay in an outgrown box  
pressing blue gentians from ditches.