

BEFORE A POET KNOWS WHAT SHE IS

Eyes as wild with light as a puma's,
blossoming breasts up-tilted to summer,
topaz and nectarine heraldry of Erato in jeans.

The marriage pleas began in high school,
mouths and arms she liked, bottled forest scent,
denim and leather always close.
New sums to sift at the deep waking.

The suitors spoke hoarsely of apartments
and TVs, 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.