

(1)
We walk
through the woods
thorns scraping,
leaving long cuts
and you
apologize, ask if I want to
turn back.
I keep on my path,
I am discovering
as I go.

Through the trees
is a clearing,
a field
of tall grasses
and prickly plants.

(2)
We surrender
 our naked legs
 to the unruly meadow
where your aunt and uncle
 spent their wedding night
in a bed
 your father
 made.

We plod through the brush,
this is not
easy walking.

We stop halfway
to bask
 in the sunlight,
to admire
 the newly painted
 reds and golds of autumn

to kiss,
to breathe
 for more than sustenance.
We breathe
 because the crisp air
 feels so good.

We breathe for
pleasure.

(3)
We arrive
on the other side,
enter into the woods again
and a wide path
appears.

This is where you played as a child.
You were king
of this forest.

It feels different now
 because I am here?
Because you have been
 beyond these woods?
Or because
your fondest memories
 now belong
 to the meadow.

-Jessica Hatfield

