The Prey

The hunter pins down
its prey
Holds it so it can't
break free
Gags it so it can't
scream
The hunter's object
penetrates his prey
works it around
within the prey
At first a little power
behind the motions
faster—quicker
More strength.
Finally, the hunter lets
the prey take a final
gasp of air
Scream
As the hunter's final
dig penetrates with all
his might into the prey
The hunter lets up his grasp
He looks into its eyes
Steps back
Observes
As his prey lies still
Violated by this stranger.

--Tawnee Shallenberger

Imaginations of My Sister, Age Six

Blue hexagons mark child stepping stones
on the green worn water-carpet.
Rippling shadow-creatures bare imaginary
fangs and rough pointed scales.
Balanced precariously on a tiny shoeless sockless foot
poised on a hexagon island, arms wavering
outward, dancing a tightrope walk
is my sister, age six.
Peering fearfully, intently at the murky green
from beneath long unkept brown bangs.
Danger, she knows should a single toe splash
Off the blue into the stormy, infested waters.
She is centered in the room
halfway through her journey. Her pace quickens
stone-skipping from left to right.
The bathroom door is only two more steps
(She has to go)
She jumps—lands on her right
left flails in the air
she lunges for the threshold
knees smack tile and arms fling for tub wall
she strains and holds her toes
hanging over the sea
and safe.

--Jim Zeigler