

Candle Trees

for Catherine Graham

I read her poems late at night
rarely at noon.
Though I looked for a brother
she talks like a sister

sharing secrets
under the summer's tarpaulin
or the skin formed over
a lake in winter.

Once upon a time
we saw the same doe shine
at the edge of a forest
neither of us was permitted to enter.

She told me how velvet hot
its antlers would burn
should I reach out and touch
the way a father's or a mother's hands

might proffer a pair of horn-tipped
candelabra – candle trees –
their ten points a humming constellation
guiding us back to the highway.