

THE BIRTHRIGHT

First the hunter, then the feast. Is that the myth
we're in? A cousin feeling, some kinship
in the nerve endings,
throws our lids wide open, names our pulse
deciduous. The furred and whorling woods
go missing in the rearview,
new cells thrum at the edge of development,
and why would the tamped-down backtrail miss us,
the mustardweed grown hip-high, viral,
while someone sights the sky in his rifle,
claims the whole skittish forest?
As if the evergreen world didn't need us
to fall for it, we learn to be artful, to tilt and let fly.
Neat heads bit red, pale bellies slung skyward,
a heap of harried flesh on which deer season
has lost its bearing. Then the white-limbed silence

catches us wide-eyed, blushes
like evening bedecks these bare poplars
and the dogs come hot at our throats.