

## FLASHLIGHT TAG

I am the one with the flashlight,  
in a sweat, trusting my feet  
through the trees. This was  
my sister's idea, gathering us all  
to play flashlight tag  
like when we were kids.  
Now we are grown up, with  
our own kids, and still, everyone's  
hiding in the soft leaves.  
My tooth of light casts sudden  
black trunks, breaks open  
the grass, jolts rocks along the shore.  
I remember myself curled  
between two trees, the Indian feet  
of the big boys anywhere at all,  
the whole world moving in  
against me, small, turned nose  
down to the clicks and shuffles  
of the night. There used to be  
a loon in Osborne's pond,  
its cold yodel floating across  
the road to where I lay. I am still  
curled inside the soft nest  
of myself, even while I aim  
the radical light . . . I flush out  
my sister Linnie first,  
and she takes my hand like a child,  
and we feed each other the old  
fears, half laughing, running.  
Then we wait, bound the way  
we've always been, not wanting  
to stir up the night. Let  
the others fall asleep, or come on  
back to the fire by themselves.  
It has taken us years to hold hands

again, to remember how plainly  
the darkness sees us, always  
as if we were eight years old,  
the battle of our parents rising  
and crashing through the night,  
and we far under the covers,  
turned breath to breath, one breath.

### IF I WERE A SWAN

I would ride high  
above my own white  
weight. I would ride  
through the lightening  
of the earth  
and the darkening,  
stillness and turbulence  
coming on in the core  
of me, and spreading  
to the hard rain,  
to the dazzle. Leaves  
would turn, but I  
would keep my eyes  
in my head, watching  
for grasses. This  
is what I would know  
deeply: the feathering  
of my bones  
against the bank.  
For the rest,  
I would be the easiest  
wave, loving just enough  
for nature's sake.  
The world would move  
under me and I would  
always be exactly