**A Dream Before the Woods**

Darci Schummer

The dream hunts me

in the afternoon

as I walk my pitbull

It shoots & fires

a direct hit

of remembering

In the dream

you lie beneath

the pink comforter

of my girlhood bedroom

An aging lamp casts

light into the closet

where my dresses

used to hang

my small shoes lined up

side-by-side

In the dream

I am on top of you

some small-boned Night-Mare

I grab your shoulders, shake

once, twice, three times

Orion

Orion

Orion wake up

I watch your eyelids

lashes long enough to tangle

I wait for them to flutter

When they don’t

this is when

this is when

this is when

terror sets in

Walking my pitbull

in the afternoon

I close my eyes

return to the bedroom

look out the window

for my father

the place he chopped wood

stacked it in piles

high and neat

but he is not there

You are not there

The bed is stripped, empty

The dog pulls me forward

into birches, poplars, oaks

which rejoice in the wind

which are heavy with buds

which are just about to burst