**Violin Concerto**

John Hazard

The soloist is a pretty redhead

with a tomboy’s freckled face.

But she’s stern, as if the music

is summer labor—wood or hay to gather.

She wrestles the score to swelling,

then tenderness, then staccato. Her hands

jerk and her fingers quiver like bees aroused.

The pinky slides, skids to a scream,

high and alone, trembles for a half note

and moves on, a wren that blinked.

Her hair’s a tight bun,

shoulders muscular, carved,

sinew and vein in the neck,

a taut core of belly.

She is music’s soldier

and leans with its demands, sways, then

yanks herself away, as if from stench.

She’s sweating a little, working

for one right move after another—

each move’s an answer.

She’s a freckle-faced old soul, earnest

and sad, a girl in a lake, working, rising

through thick, complacent water,

pulling herself up and up

till she shatters the surface,

and with open arms

hugs the whole blue sky,

inhales—dramatic, almost a violence—

and opens her eyes

to the vast woods around the lake.

Treading water, she calls

for the animals, and they come.