

Marry a Man Who

asks the trees for permission

before driving in the 5/16" drill

who sets the taps on a fogged morning

before work because he wants to see

some sweetness flow, who

even if often grumpy

or grumbly walks out into the mud

and the spring-warm rain

and converses with a rugged

rough-barked red maple

in a non-verbal way

then tells you, *this one said no*

and puts away his tools.

Yard Sale

Spring light was thicker then:
supple, gelatinous, falling
over the forms of what lay

under the lilacs
where the block had cracked
in the driveway—toys,

games, clothes carefully spread
by mothers and tagged
with each one's careful

cost. First the early risers:
feet tromping the morning
dew, hands turning over and over,

looking for a price. Then latecomers,
children in tow, frazzling
in all directions about the old

kitchen chairs. Finally
as light slanted, the remnants
on blankets: small girls' frocks,

Barbie dress without a wearer,
the round plastic shovel with yellow
plastic pail. That night

at the first mixed party
under the garage's eaves,
under the sweep of speakers

blasting some synthesized slow dance,
couples began to pair off:
two and two, awkward

hand on waist,
awkward hand
on shoulder, and me.

I felt the press
of my feet inside shoes,
legs thin against

jean shorts—the sorrow
of marrow, skin waking up
to its own cost.