

ACTUAL ANIMALS

It's not that the antlers pain, exactly,  
    budding from her forehead,  
but they do in the first few weeks  
    feel raw,  
    and her gait  
                                    changes to accommodate  
the weight of them,  
    so that she feels as if her head  
    is still turning after  
it stops,  
    and there are doorways  
to consider,  
    and other people's eyes,  
so that after a while  
    she stops coming inside,  
    and watches the house  
from the edge of the woods,  
    thinking: those were my parents,  
    but now they are just people,  
thinking once I slept there, and not  
    in a swirl of grass.  
She remembers the last  
    boy she kissed longest  
of all, but even that  
    goes with time  
    as her flank browns and dapples  
and she grows elegant, tentative,  
    and dumb.