

Bette Lynch Husted

Night Lessons

Standing at the stake, dusk settling on my shoulders,
gathering in my belly. Nighthawks circle
this late summer grass, the old schoolhouse
dimming to shadow, crickets' chill song
still. Then my teacher laughs
leaping to kick high as my head:
Pull back the wave
and let it go. His strong young hands trail
ribbons, pale in water-air. My own body
follows, white-haired shadow floating
somewhere I have never been and yet
remember like a dream. Children's voices
lost behind those tall swings slide toward light
of open doors across the street. Slap
of shoe on palm. *Be careful, now.* He grins.
He knows I'll try to fly. Why else
these sudden stars and white-barred wings,
this body of evidence? *Once more, then?*
Yes. The nighthawks cry.