

Goat

Don't fall for it – the sidelong look, that punted puck
of a pupil - Goat wants nothing more

than to slip a cleated mitt beneath a fuss of skirts,
raise merry hell.

Button up. Keep very still.

Don't think about that knock-kneed hopscotch,
dapper, quickstepped, keen. The long, tall grin.

Goat means to take your shoulder as a bit
between his teeth, skip in and out like nifty ribbonwork.

Call him *Stickpin*. Call him *Sheershank*.

Don't call to him at all –

But oh, my girl, you will.

Call it fancy. Call it whim.

Call it a door opening on the slant stair

to the room you didn't know was there,
though you've lived here all your life –

And come down with the dawn.

Now you've been gone too long -

the dance was over weeks ago, your guests
have all gone home.

Now you're shoeless, skint

and swindled. Now the daybreak wants to know.

Now the piper's piping up beyond the gate - *too late, my girl, too late.*