2000

For the Falconer

Carl Phillips

FOR THE FALCONER

The hunt—was good; the kill,

less so, as you'd said to
expect. I don't listen, always—

Plus the noise. Plus distraction:

the dogs, naturally, the boys
whose job it is to hem and then

beat at the brush, driving
the animal in, closer, towards
the men, the men beautifully

negotiating their mounts
meanwhile. Which part

don't you understand? Also

arrowheads, here a rainwashed
and single bone, relics everywhere
chipped and for the naming:

I love and *I mean to* and

—others. You'd said patience,
you'd said vigilence—*Watch,*

something will break through.

And indeed: first a pheasant,
then a fox, then a smallish

deer—each one of which no
sooner had stepped, panicking,

from cover,

the men would
bring, as they say, the game down. . . .

But none of these

what I'd wanted,
or want now.

I am not patient, as I'd
said to expect. You don't
listen, always—Plus the horns,

plus the banners: of blue,

for diminishment, pale

resurrection yellow, already

the moon like a slightly
uptilted boat tugging
doggedly its soon-to-be-dark

cargo. And meanwhile, plenty
of light, still—

each could still see the other;
it would be entire;
and all at once—

Which part had you hoped
to hear: the boys at last done

with beating? the dogs leashed,
done retrieving? the men,

but now more distantly giving shout?

The field is yours, that
I stagger back to.

(come)

(what it most sounded like)

(plunder)