

All of Them Gentlemen

"A gentleman is simply a patient wolf."
—Lana Turner

Mostly, I remember the way
they roamed. Packs of them. Those

whose faces I braved to behold
at all. Bristled skulls. Studded

ears. Even now I still think
about their lips, like a wound

that refused to heal. Or their skin,
callused & thick, leashed

over each broad knuckle. How
I imagined across my tongue

their restless quiver, a musky brine
that soon taught my throat when

to welcome, when to resist. I'd always
recognized hunger. The cave

in which it paced, prowled.
After school, it would follow me

home, my skin panting. The air fevered
& humid. The heat of a dozen

zippered snarls fogging my dreams.
I knew better than to wake.

Here I stayed safe, but
pursued. Here, the night took me

by the nape, yet never shook.
I nuzzled. I mewled. Like my mouth,

the moon shone feral.
Later, I lingered in hallways

& locker rooms, but briefly,
certain my scent would confess.

Certain they knew I pined
for darkness, the kind that loped

beneath faded Levi's, curled
damp ringlets in clefts

where light longed to lick.
Between classes, I'd catch

myself lurking. I stared too
long, too hard, while one

of them bared his unforgiving
bite. In return I laid for him

my heart, carnivorous.
Once, we strayed so close

I could've knelt & lapped
at my own reflection.