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Don't Call Her Punkin

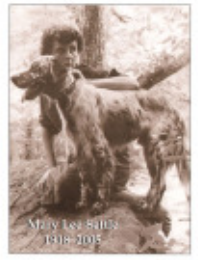
Mary Silver

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Don't Call Her Punkin

They say this world's not a little girl anymore.
She's grown into her pearls—
Cairo, Tokyo, Chicago—
and she wears them everywhere now.

You can't stand on a mountain and tell me
you see her *there*, snuggled
under her crazy quilt with hair ribbons straggling
like the road home. That's not a lullaby
you hear, it's a mockingbird.

You can't lift a hand to the sky past sunset these days
and touch the blue velour dress she wore
for best, the one she used to doodle on
with a wet finger in church, the one
that caught the air when she spun

and turned her scrawny knees into a clapper
so she rang even louder than summer rain.
That dress was cut into rags years ago
and the rags used up. I don't know
what she wears to church now, or if she even goes.

—Mary Silver

