

GILLIAN HARDING-RUSSELL

Boys Wrestling

When one son falls
into the grip
of the other son's arms, I protest

"No more fighting!" Note
their smirks, their begrudging
compliance (most of all

that the losing younger son will not
give up, hair ruffled and sweaty, butting into
his older brother again), such outlawed
pleasure they take in arm-to-arm

combat. So I reconsider all the arguments
banded at a board meeting: one teacher strident
slamming it on the desk (backed by all the latest
statistics, authorities – psychologists, social workers
etc.) about war games and violence on TV
and video games; Well haven't I disparaged
Grand Auto Theft I and II, though not outrightly
forbidden Age of the Empires?

All but water pistols
out the back door last summer; but now
a larger war hangs over us daily, I oppose
the example of the whole world and the law
of supremacy and survival that rules
in the tangled modern jungle of motives
prerogatives. Back

in the kitchen, I hear them at it
again, and so resign myself to listen
for trouble. Over the counter top, I watch them

tangle bodies over a carpet desert sands,
exploring the length and girth, the strength
and tenacity of their extending bodies

(sublimating a world where bodies and lives
once were physical) hunting down food,
defending territories, serious business
when sports were intended to train
for life itself and love

not virtual.