

ANNA WÄRJE

Falling in Love for the First Time

is like lying in bed on the coldest morning
with mist rising from the lake,
and bird sounds chattering against the beating waves like
back-up singers harmonizing with the drum
and your nose puffing steam like a tea-kettle,
arcing up into the bare beams of the cabin
and your limbs curled rabbit-warm and small in a den of
fluffed quilt

while your father builds a fire in the wood stove downstairs
and the clanging sounds filter up to the loft
and wake you up again and again
small awakenings
and there's the smell of wood like smoked ham
and the smell of your mother's pancakes just dropping onto the griddle
there's that sound of sizzling
and you know that you will be up soon,
chasing your dog along the stones of the beach and
diving naked into the lake that the sun has warmed;
you will be clambering over twisted tree stumps and
roasting hotdogs in the fire for lunch,
licking mustard as it dribbles into your sleeve

but for now you are doing this,
lying here in bed listening to the bang of the stove door
and the crackle of wood just catching the lick of flame,
and you don't move from beneath the covers
but only lie there filled with the anticipation of
dog-chasing and diving

and your mother's hand smoothing back your hair while she
drizzles maple syrup over your pancakes

you lie there filled
with the fear of this coldest morning,
and the cold floor under your feet,
and it feels like you will never move;
and then you do

because there is always that moment when you
push back the quilt
and you are getting out of bed,
and you are shuddering with the exhilaration of your own
reckless decision

because between your den of blankets and
the whole rambling day,

there is this huge, wide expanse of
hair-raising coldness
and only your own bravery will propel you across it

and already your foot is springing toward the floor;

and falling in love for the first time
is like that.

