

***The School for Young Rabbits,***

*which my father read to me  
in our old guttural tongue,  
the villain strangely explosive*

Daily they recite, identify  
valerian, violas, vetch,  
learn to fool the hounds.

Their play is hopscotch, high-jump,  
broad-jump, hide and seek.  
For chorus they circle Teacher

in frockcoat who leads on violin.  
Last they grab their rucksacks  
and pair off. He warns once again:

“Be quiet, stick together, shun bushes.  
If FOX sinks teeth in your neck  
there’s no help though you scream, beg.”

**With no audience except two children and a cat**

I guide with soft broom onto my shovel  
a ground-squirrel perfect still,

brilliance of black eyes perfect still,  
from grass just past the stable door's

threshold on which the black cat  
sits to sun and receive visitors.

North of screening brush under  
a juniper's shelter I tilt my shovel,

whisper as I let this stillness slide.

## Verdict

“Good luck” as his gurney glides  
down the gray-green corridor.

Double doors at the end  
open on sharp too-bright.

In my waiting space Judge Judy  
sums on TV. Some watch.

Did we love well enough?

All await the verdict.