

Juliet Antill

Three Cocks

A Bunsen burner can't heat a room
but it can take your fringe off.
This is how it is.
Not love at first sighting (there is none)
but curiosity, trepidation; what swells
beneath the fly of this boy's Levi's?
It's the same as I open my mouth in French
to pronounce the word *grenouille*.

The second's a caged bear.
It makes a show of rattling the bars,
growls so only girls can hear;
it presses me against the lockers
as I reach for Blake's Songs.
I intuit the size of its snout,
the coarseness of its whiskers.
First bell; we retreat to corners.

The third's an arsonist—
if I believe the promotional literature.
Springsteen's on fire and I could catch
quicker than a pair of tights.
I've got the chemistry of combustion by heart:
Fuel plus Oxygen plus Heat.
But what part
for this Indian rope trick?