

CLARE ROSSINI

Girl with Hair Tangled in Rose Bush

She is running into the night over which a half-moon presides,
Chopped off, it seems, by some

Insensible hand—
Running from the “seekers,” as the boys are called in this game,

Now making her way toward the iron trellis on which clambers
The bush, an autumnal mess of yellowing

Leaves and thorns, this bush
The oldest living thing in the neighborhood, the most green of heart.

And she, stumbling through the trellis's
Rusted flanks, a bit of cake in her hand, grabbed to be feasted on

While she lies in hiding,
In her privacy's sweet dark, when the fine strands of her hair,

The soft, out-spreading strands of her hair,
Catch on the bush and scramble among tiny thorns, every animal

Move of her
Causing a tearing pain

And she wails
From the shock of it, the bush

Enthralled with her, numb leaves and crotchety vines alive
With girlness.

And now the boys come running
Back to the patio ringed with torches, where the parents stand

In circles, sipping glasses of wine, “Come quick!” the boys shouting,
“She's caught,” flames from the torches

Smoking and rearing toward the sky. And she, her cake in the dirt,
The musk of dying

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Roses in her hair,
Is learning from the bush to stand quite still, to look

The wounded moon in the eye.