

Self-Portrait at Fifteen with Father

Today, we wait easily together
for a glimpse of branched bone

already scraped of its velvet.
On most days, he does not see

hesitation as I mean it.
Most days, I say I am ready.

It must not be a glancing blow,
he says, or square

between the eyes. Clean,
between the fourth and fifth

rib, or we will have
to follow the blood.

Today, we both blink.
I cock my wrist to the left,

burying the arrow in the ribs
of the earth.