As a Boy

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As a Boy

I can see you as a boy;
Aunts slobbering kisses over you,
Your mother saying, “Drink your milk.”
I can see you — small, blond, frail,
holding a puppy,
palm after palm gently
passing over the black bloated belly.
Cradled in your arms,
warmth swaying back and forth
between you.
It convulsing slightly in puppy grunts.
You held it, opened your skin to it,
close, tight . . . but . . .

Not as tight as you could;
for if you had
you would have sprayed its life
over the walls
and crushed the body
out of sight,
and you knew that,
Even then, you knew.

And that’s why you loved it.

— Carmen Largaespada