What Kind of Empathy is This?

Autumn Sharkey

I was in the hungry push
of a kiss when it happened
a bench beneath us
my face sheltered in her hands the same way
that you hold me, base of palm against jaw
against rib
press of tongue and tooth and hedgerows

She tells me this as we lie in her room
naked on the duvet. A breeze is arriving
to cool our bodies, and her head rests
in the crook of my shoulder. My hand
strokes her hair as she talks

and something catches my attention
the movement is a man
watching in that press of hedgerows
suddenly in focus, and
my eyes are drawn down
to the slight jingle of a metal buckle
the twin flapping tails of an open belt
a bird-flesh shock of skin

I want to press backwards
into her story, wrap that thick yellow scarf
|of her's around them. Let this open
into a path we can leave on. A trespass on
the silence drawing out this moment.
I want to be the other woman on the bench,
the hedge, the man.