

Manhunt or Ode to First Kisses

By Elizabeth Acevedo

it was always the older kids
running to Riverside,
hiding behind trees and underneath

jungle gyms, holding their breath
in the darkness as the other team
tried to find them.

I could not wait to be old enough;
a captor's arms clasping.

Manhunt, manhunt 1, 2, 3.

This poem asks me to turn the game was
the compass in a different direction: a different kind of winning:
perhaps commentary on police the chase about the waiting,
or the assaults
that happen in the dark
when children play games wanting to hear a
countdown softly whispered
while adults sip beers and as the July air
summer unrolls a carpet
into the worst of memories. stuck our baby hairs
to our necks, and everything
But no. Sometimes was playful in the damp.
being honest means offering
more than one draft.

Source: *Poetry* (March 2021)