

LILY OF THE VALLEY

Seek shelter, said the man.
But where will I find her?
You jump to conclusions, kid —

that she's a woman, for one.
It might just be the way a leaf
curls, plumb weighed down

by porcellaneous bells,
odoriferous bells, the...Yes,
I butted in...*Convallaria majalis.*

But you see, I went on —
it was dark in that house
and I was whirling with a wraith,

helter-skelter, beds, toys
and lamps to bump in — then
she threw me off spinning,

and stood there, arms akimbo —
Have you danced with her?
He said — *don't ask; I told you*

seek shelter. Bizarre, I said,
so I should build a hut, when
I can't drive a nail straight,

crosscut? I'll help you, he said.
So we walked into the valley
found a porch of an abandoned house

and sat there a spell. I saw a wasp
dragging a larva bigger than itself.
In the yellowing light of afternoon

we raised up walls, even tacked up
a dusty photograph of a couple
holding hands. Before I knew it

the sun had set, I was alone, and
through the loosely thatched roof
I could see the Pleiades.