

Jennifer Tonge

Among Your Tall Hedges

Always I want you to open,
like an orchid or a baby's fist,
like a starfish, sending out its
naked hunger. You sharpen
the turns, make the pathways

bright with rhinestones. I follow,
filling my pockets. We are
in a garden, and the world
closes over us. I say that

my roses are yellow, and keep
walking. I think that one
of us is the Minotaur
and one of us has lost
a ball of string. You are

always busy making signs
and clocks and copper elephants.
I watch you work and wonder
what you're thinking. You never

say. I know it's a perversity.
Given an oval, you make it
a marquise, and you have
a box of other people's teeth.
I study the letters in your alphabet.

You have a room of curious
toys, all antique, know
the secret growing places
of wild raspberries, and live

in a house I've never seen. I want you
to go with me to India. I want you
to come to tea on Sunday.
So I say that my roses are yellow,
and you agree, then pick a flower
and tell me it's a nightshade.