

the mushers' daughter

KATHLEEN KIMBALL-BAKER

runs as if nothing
matters as if everything matters as if
nothing as if there is nothing
to compare with running she runs

as if she speaks the language
of running speaks it like no one
else speaks it as if she owns these woods as if
the woods want her
to own them as if owning

is a real thing she runs as if she is part
of a wild dog pack as if she sometimes
leads them sometimes follows as if she has run
all her life with wild dogs as if
no one else will ever be
so lucky in the photo

we can only see her back, her sure stride, the twists
and the waves of her long hair as if human
hair is the same as wild dog fur as if
never mind it is in the photo

she runs with the wild dog pack who could
run without her as if the wild dogs could be happy
without her she runs with the wild

as if she is fluent in wild as if people
ought to know a girl
can be fluent in wild as if

her spine carries the mystery
of the wild as if she has joined
the code of wild dogs with her own

as if in this life she would
do anything else she runs

