
JAMES ARTHUR

Hundred Acre Wood

Some of these stories are too sweet for me.
Winnie-the-Pooh is so innocent, his little songs leave me cold.

But I like this—your hand across my hand,
your head against my shoulder. Your first winter, I carried you

even along the margins of the highway,
strapped against my chest in a sling. *You never can tell with bees,*

says Pooh, who seems to believe that almost nothing can be told,
but I am your morose, restless father,

and you are four years old. You like front-end loaders
and every kind of train;

I like reading to rooms of strangers, and a few drinks at the airport
while I'm waiting for my plane.

I like the book's final chapter, a story you don't yet understand,
in which boy and bear

climb to Galleons Lap for one last look out across the land—
at the sandy pit, the six pines,

the Hundred Acre Wood. Don't forget me, says the boy to the bear,
who has no wish to understand

what he does not already know. Little boy who I carried
along the highway in the winter in northern Michigan,

I like hearing you in the morning
when you lie in your dark room, and sing.