

The Highwayman Teaches Me About Sex and Death

by Kirsty Logan

you've finished? says the teacher. *good girl, read a book.*
graze-kneed and rain-blown, in the library I am queen
of all the soldiers and genies and foxes and chocolatiers.
cross-legged among my courtiers I empty shelves,

make a house out of stacks, spines rainbowing.
I open the first of my subjects: a poem-story
of a highwayman, the landlord's daughter, and her love.
I turn pages and the pictures breathe:

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees
hooves moon dark latch eyes coins rope trap
Bess the landlord's daughter, the landlord's blackeyed daughter
gun breasts dress shame shouts blood blood blood

I rise slowly — a flower opening —
with the book held holy as a veil.
behind me, stacks of children's stories
left as cairns.

