

*This poem is a conversation between a dog and a squirrel. Read the poem and answer the questions that follow.*

Dog and Squirrel:  
Steps  
in a Flirtation

The bushy flick of your tail  
catches my attention.

*I am aware of your presence,  
but I am ignoring you.*

5 You are now my bull's-eye.  
This will be a fine game.  
*It may be a game,  
but I set the rules.*

Whenever you lower your guard,  
10 I step forward.  
*I never lower my guard.  
All escape routes are intact.*

My body is an arrow  
pointing at your heart.  
15 *O large clumsy one,  
have you any idea how fast I can run?*

I draw closer.  
The space between us is nothing.  
*Odd how the sunlight*  
20 *kindles your dark fur.*

I can taste the silk of your tail.  
You can't possibly get away now.  
*I know the precise point at which  
I must flee. Still, those eyes . . .*

25 Gaze locked, I pounce!  
And you are . . .  
*Gone, of course.  
My heart pounds! See you tomorrow?*

—Joyce Sidman