

JIM RICHARDS

Egg in a Bottle

All she wants to do
is get a hardboiled egg
sucked whole
into a glass soda bottle
using a single match.
Science is the badge
they are working on,
her little boy scouts.

Prolapse. That's the word
the doctor used yesterday
to describe the fact:
her bladder and rectum
low and lowering. Feels
like a baby crowning.

Little kings, these scouts,
their regal blue and yellow
uniforms too baggy or
too tight, laden with badges.
Science. She lights another
match. Another lungful
of fumes. What is

a boy? she thinks, all
their eyes on the bottle.
She drops in the match,
places the peeled egg
over the small opening.
The egg quivers, is
sucked slowly through

the narrow neck of glass,

then plops. The boys
cheer, jump, bang fists
on the table. Why, one
boy asks—her boy—why,
Mom, are you crying?