Because I Have Small Lips

A man has been sent to prison for harassing his neighbors for four years by whistling the theme song from *The Addams Family* every time he saw them.

All the neighbors—
the boys *and* the girls—
could whistle,  
except for me.  
They whistled  
radio tunes,  
school songs,  
even their own little ditties.  

But when I puckered my lips to whistle,  
all that came out was an owl-like “whoo.”  
My neighbors said,  
“You’re holding your lips wrong,  
too much like a kiss.”  

So I started to practice  
alone in my room.  
I pursed and scrunched my lips,  
“whooo”-ing,  
“whew”-ing,  
and “wheee”-ing.  

In front of the mirror,  
I shaped my lips  
into rose buds and fish lips,  
but I needed *bigger* lips—  
lips that could make a sharper sound,  
a clear, cutting whistle,  
a sound greater than the flow  
from a tiny fan, a squeaky balloon.  

Then I saw people using props—  
Teeth, fingers, and blades of grass didn’t help me.  
I had to settle on a yellow plastic whistle
and my mom’s consolation—
“It’s just that boys can whistle before girls can.”
I knew I would whistle
when my little lips were ready.

Once they were,
it was too late to care about whistling
at my neighbors—
lucky for me,
‘cause people go to jail for that.