Robert Frost, called out at second base

It was the fact that she was a woman, a woman playing second base. Those damn literary games, you hated them even though you could never say no, not compete. If it was only a man, you would've knocked him on his ass, come up with fists clenched for a good brawl. Sure, you caught a glimpse of the Vermont range, green behind second base in dreamy summer sun as you tried to stretch a single into a double. You knew baseball. Any former pitcher would, right?

The ball, heading toward home plate, when you swung, white as any iced-up birch tree on a winter morning. A solid hit, no question, a hard rope through the gap in left center. Besides, it was July and no one was going to tell you what to do. You trust yourself – nobody else. There’s no worse you could do; it’s all in the going.

But. She stood between you and that second sack. Rounding first wide, gaining speed, you looked up, saw her, a burr in your path. You stopped: stolid, sleeves rolled, chino pants dusty, staring up at the ball, arcing above the pasture, landing in her glove with a leathery snap. She swiped and made the tag. “You’re out!” At that moment, you stood alone, turned, murmured something, and trudged off the field to the diminished whispers from a breeze-stirred maple.