

Sun Dogs, Rising

Our lives converge, a slide of tectonic plates,
five days after a full moon. Snowflakes the size of dandelion clocks
melt against the windshield on my way to meet you.
Your introduction to the north of this planet is biting.

You: tiny black wolf.
Six pounds of sleek, obsidian distress—
a chunk missing from the cupped leaf of your ear.
You wail, and I fear your delicate trachea will rupture.

You tremble until your muscles collapse, exhausted.
What, you stare outside, are these wafers of burning cold?
We sit on a couch for hours, until—at last—you paw your way over,
tail planted firmly between legs, a trench of questions:

Where is my sun? You howl with your eyes.
Where is my sun? Where is my sun? Where is my sun?

Under a starless sky, waning gibbous obscured by cloud, we drive.
Tufts of icy cotton persist against the window glass.
Your coat ripples like ink under streetlights;
your age is approximate, but the moon is 18.34 days old.

Between the pads of each paw, rusty earth of your desert hills.
You quiver around the apartment—sniff oak, iron, granite.
Candlewick eyes alight with fire, you howl again:
Where is my sun?

In the bed, you soften against my chest, push vertebrae against ribs.
Chihuahua. Chi. Life force. Air.
We breathe in tandem. Thud of heartbeat, drift of bloodstream,
your pulse steady, aching under my palm.

What is your story? I howl with my bones.
What is your story? What is your story? What is your story?
We don't yet know the seismic proportions of sun we will share.

Together, we dream of the home within, of continental drift;
oceanic dusk, expansion and contraction, flow and hope.
You draw closer, a love in silky armour,
nestling for hot spots.