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## Animal Ways

Beth Paulson

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# Animal Ways

by Beth Paulson

The cries of coyotes in the night  
woke me up halfway between  
hope and dread, that shadowed place.  
Or was it the hungry mountain lion,  
screaming at a yearling kill?

Outside the bright and silent moon  
hooked a curtain of black sky,  
snow reflecting borrowed light  
on road and fence, and branches  
of the barren oaks gave way to wind.  
I walked uneasy through the house,  
feeling the weight of life and dark.  
Sleep did not come for me again.

By morning's calm, snow had filled  
the footprints of the animals,  
on one small drift a red smear  
almost concealing that wild cache,  
and into the river across the fields  
white-covered hills had fallen.

