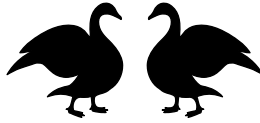


WATER HORSE



my hooves could churn
the breakers into foam
the bridges would creak like empty
swings and the tunnels shape
vacant moues with their mouths

some people are part-
jay see the blue
shadows at their hairlines
the predatory

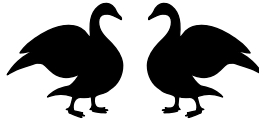
some people innocently
untrustworthy they can't help
living half in the sky

this city I walk through on two
human feet is an island
it reaches across the water
with great steel cable
with highways full of myth
full of wildness and bright
as streetlamps
I could pace through
their serial haloes

or I could gallop through dirty
bay no colder than I am no
fiercer no more muscular
than I am in no
useful direction

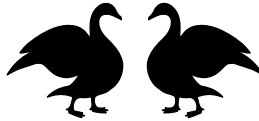
refusing or
just forgetting
to be safe

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES



My my my radio is raining, there's music
in the weather. My computer prefers
idiom without pheromones; it abhors
two echoes together. Hear the liquor
bottles sing with the blender, no lyrics,
all amber vibrato. Sprung from rehab,
the vacuum cleaner snarls over serif,
line break, eye-rhyme, margins. Meanwhile, you stick
on a bad phrase like a record. You sense
that my I, I, I is mere interference,
my character is just characters, and next
that I don't believe in you either. Vexed?
Divine that these phrases mean the same thing:
I am an animal. I am a machine.

THE BLACK WOLF



He shivered in my yard like a wet rug on a clothesline,
teeth yellow and hanks of fur peeled off, black as a cellar
in a Poe tale, shadows streaming off his bones in tatters.

Come with me, he said, emphasis on *with*, if that matters,
if you're counting stresses as I stumble. I followed him
like spring after winter, my fear scent sharp as the oak rot.

The woods bristled with big hungry biting creatures but the wolf
watched over me, prowled between me and desire, until we met
the bear. Oh, she wanted to play with me. She scratched her back

against the warm exposed dirt, snatched my glasses, cackled.
Glare all you like with those old red lamps, she told him,
no dog can intimidate me. She knew how to occupy space.

Then came the showdown of mythic poses, archetypal
profiles, a growl in the throat like a bad dream of bees--hear
the rhymes start to close in again now, too random and slack

to please you entirely, but still putting the poem to bed.
The battle persists. No blood lost yet, but a god's cold snout
has nudged me, jaws clicking. If they are emblems, I cannot trace

them, I am lost here, no unfurled string will lead me out.
Wolf has no rhyme. I will never give my life to that bear.
Listen as I tremble and whine like a dying machine.