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Vixen

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Vixen

Here on the farm the vixen
hunts during the day; how
exquisitely she moves, how beautifully

fox-red, whenever she breaks off
the language of her body that intends
never to be seen. Last Sunday, I crossed

over to the windbreak
of leafless trees, among the hummocks
that descend into the drainage ditch beyond

where she was tracking,
unaware of my immediacy, within a few
yards, so mindful was she of mice, of rats

in the matted stalks of the meadow.
This afternoon, she emerged
in the clearing beyond the barn. I watched

her stretch and shake
luxuriously, so unconstrained
after a day and night of winter rain. Now,

she begins to trail
a new scent, nose down
among the dark roots of the browned grass.

Sinewed, she articulates open
ground on black-furred feet—
a streak of flame igniting the wind, a mind

at one with the conflagration
of the moment, shoulders
hunched, arched hair on neck, her vernacular

perpetual patrol
 and reconnaissance,
 her sudden disappearance only an exhibition

of her sudden reappearance,
 her reappearance the command parlance
 of her disguise among what is apparent in

her inexorable leap,
 pouncing on a meadow vole,
 on whatever stirs beneath her, as our hearts

quicken, her foam-flecked tongue
 flashing, the tail of her succulent prey
 brandished between the wedge of her jaws.

Wally Swist

WALLY SWIST is the author of more than twenty books and chapbooks of poetry. His most recent book is *Huang Po and the Dimensions of Love* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2012). His book *Velocity* was published by Virtual Artists Collective of Chicago in 2013.

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