

# Of Hares

SARA DEABLER

The last brown hare in winter. Struggling through dead brush. Knife-twigs draw blood like medical tests: high cholesterol, low blood pressure, is she taking any medication? A bag in the hallway. Mewing and kicking. Ears convulsing. The last brown hare of winter brambles in whiteness. Charcoal on her lips look like moon innards. Young gravity. I float above a sterile smelling hospital bed, bile swelling from my throat into the hallow space of my mouth. Craters in my teeth. Some missing engine. Descent. Crash through ward 14, 13, 12, etc., into the desolate tension of the ICU until I'm sitting in a chair by her bed staring at the charcoal on her lips. Charcoal on her lips like charcoal. The last brown hare in winter brambles into the garden, knocking over flower pots, signing them with blood. A note on the counter. An autumn-to-snow gust, into the crevice, beside the fridge where the dust never moves. And the hare rests. Her fur stands on end. Eyes tremble. A failed struggle. The hare rests. Black lips. Look away. The machine choir beeps life: sterile meadowlarks, masters of delicate rhythm. That onomatopoeia fills my legs with river stones. They fly around me, above me, through me, engulfing me in their song. Be gentle. Concentrate on the rhythm. I need their sheet music; I need to find where the fermata modifies the digital staccato and when. Free-verse certainty. Steel-feathered improvisation. Gentle, bird. Keep the rhythm. The brown hare gazes through blades of grass and they fragment the garden into violent angles. She knows she's the last. Her whiskers twitch and she thinks of where she should have been tonight. Who mends a dying hare? Caught between the white and the brown. Dashing across roads and into gardens. Reckless pause on the pavement. Disregard for swerving cars and where she makes them swerve. A note on the counter. Remorse in the garden. Nothing alive in that hospital room. She breathes. I breathe. No life. She knew I'd come swerving home that night. A note on the counter and charcoal on her lips and nothing alive. Overture ending with no further movements. Feathers drift from a high place, burning in the atmosphere. Caught in between. I begin to pant. My tongue unwatered soil. Limp, withered beetroots: hands on a crisp sheet. She'll live, says the doctor. And then?

*Sara Deabler is a writer, feminist, and victim of wanderlust. About to complete a combined degree in English and Women's Studies, Sara intends to pursue an MA in Creative Writing.*

TO SUBMIT YOUR POEM FOR THE AUTUMN 2014 COMPETITION, OR FOR INFORMATION:

[maboyd@ucalgary.ca](mailto:maboyd@ucalgary.ca) | [www.ucalgary.ca/poemoftheseason](http://www.ucalgary.ca/poemoftheseason)

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