



Dog's gift

I've waited by this door for several hours,
my face is changing to grey, the coldness
of the hard surfaces is seeping into my small
symmetrical paws. I'm not seeing the dark stairs,
I'm not going back to sit in the fire.

I have made circles of the garden, at high speed,
a noose around my neck. I have done the barking thing.
They think they know my thoughts but there are plans.

They try to make me look at pictures of hills
and listen to the drumming of her heels,
her ankles transparent, her tattooed blanket.
I am next. I will be seen. They'll listen to my heart,
ignore my genuine dog's smile, and hold my trembling
black wool head to keep me from leaving.

The moon is throwing giant in-me shadows
in the blueness of the room. If I want to
bring it to an end if I want to go back
to the stream and put my nose under water.
If I want the thigh-high grass
and swarms of gliders overhead, if I don't want to
think about shoes or the thoughts I had
the night before, I'll become acquainted
with this box of matches. I'll be a user of tools
and put the flame to the beds of roses.
I'll give them a burning bush, this dog's gift.

I'll slip out to the graveyard and eat the grass of the mad
before they fill the cracks in my head with reason and meat.

Suzanne Batty