

Theory of Evolution

Now that the bitch has quit giving birth
there's a difficult choice to be made.

After my last boy entered this world I swore I would never
kill again. Not that I ever had the stomach for it

but I've always recognized my obligation. She was stray
when I found her and fed her and gave her a home

and that made her mine. Someone else had silently
shirked the duty they acquired in a pet shop in Madrid.

German Shepherd puppies are pretty to look at but don't
stop growing, their hard white teeth eventually

capable of grinding bones, eighteen muscles
lifting and tilting each ear so that they can locate quicker

sounds lower or higher and further away than we can register.
They smell what we can't even imagine in concentrations

one hundred million times smaller than we can perceive, but sometimes they eat
each other's shit. They can see about as well as most men

over forty and they are driven like us to seek each other out,
flesh calling to flesh across amazing distances,

bonding briefly like we do too in torrents of ecstasy
that overwhelm every rational consideration.

They live and die in the hollows of these hills
and drink the same clear mountain water we do.

But it isn't a crime to drown them or strike the back of their heads
against a rock. We speak of sacrificing the young, using

the same euphemism to refer to ungrown men with an equal claim
to a future whose lives are devoured by war.

And I guess that's all I meant to say—that there's probably
not much difference between us.

Originally published in *The Journal*
Issue #30

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