

EDWARD LENSE

Wolf Dream

He hunches into his fur coat
and waits in the alley behind her house.
Her bedroom window still is lit:
she sleeps with her husband once a year,
and he is waiting up for her.
Wife and lover watch from the alley
as her husband's shadow crosses the window, comes back,
stands still in the light.
After midnight, the window dark, the lovers
crawl behind the garbage cans into an empty field,
fall tight together, roll over and over,
arms locked into crooks around each other's chests,
breath pressed out in whistling gasps.
Their tongues loll into each other's mouths,
their nails bite through fur and cloth
into skin. When they feel each other's blood, they change.
He is the stronger. Her face, human again,
stares up at the black shape crouched on her chest,
its fur heavy and stiffening with her blood.
He no longer sees her. He is sharing her husband's dream
of night skies, shadows crossing the moon
on four legs, two; crooked trees knock in the wind,
their shadows on the snow waver around the dark cleft
where the eyes wait, and the harsh breath;
then the snow bursts in a flurry of claws, cries, a shot
and a new shadow falls, rolls
over and over, hunches itself into human form
as it dies at the feet of the one man fated to hunt it down:
a man scarred to the bone
who had lain mauled, had felt death enter his flesh
as a lover, as a great wolf.