

GRACE BUTCHER

Responsibilities

Across the melting ice and snow
great gray dogs run at me
because I also run. They think
this is their wilderness. I must
prove them wrong. I am ready,
warm and happy, to kill them
as they leap at me.

Also the earth for some reason
pounds at my feet. Yes, I suppose
to have a love like this, I must be
punished somehow, or made to
appreciate the earth more by its
hurting me this way. Whose logic is this?
What is all this pain about?

All this sacrifice of animals and all
this pain I offer up each year to make
the summer come and oil my skin with sweat —
maybe it would come without all this.
But I am afraid to think what would happen
to this earth without me. My running is necessary.
It keeps things the way they are.