

JENNIFER HIGHLAND

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Glove Hollow, New Snow

Otter tracks on the brook again—  
lollop and slide and disappear  
through a hole in the ice  
to pop up again from a gap downstream  
and putter across the rocks.

I never see those hump-backed hunters,  
just prints and troughs they leave behind,  
skirmishes on snow,  
and dark water calling and calling  
through holes chewed in the ice.

Carefully I stalk each passage,  
a trail of tiny emptinesses  
on the surface.  
At each dive I pause on the brink  
of a cold I cannot enter.

Enough. I turn from the frozen road  
to the other road, where boots on gravel  
leave no trace,  
yet a chill trails behind me  
poignant as an ache.

Slick shadow, current-combed,  
twists and pours between the trees.  
Heavy jaws  
clamp onto the familiar world,  
wrench until it cracks.

Dusk to dawn it follows me:  
dark shape in dark water  
gnawing, gnawing.  
Sharp teeth chiseling up  
through what remains between us.



## ABOUT JENNIFER HIGHLAND

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Jennifer Highland's work has appeared in *Josephine Quarterly*, *Quiddity*, *The Quotable*, *The Sow's Ear Poetry Review*, and *Measure*. She lives in Bridgewater, New Hampshire, and practices osteopathy at New Hampshire's first solar-powered medical office.

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