JENNIFER HIGHLAND

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.

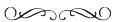
Carefully I stalk each passage, a trail of tiny emptinesses on the surface. At each dive I pause on the brink of a cold I cannot enter.

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.

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ABOUT JENNIFER HIGHLAND

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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