

12 Dreams

by Jeanne Dickey

1. That dog again; enduring love.
2. The avalanche falls rapidly, and I hear the man cry "Oh my God." Was that a prayer?
3. A man sets out to jog on a suburban street. It's 6 a.m., and stray dogs roam in packs. Their owners moved on and abandoned them, so the dogs reverted to the wild. To the wolf state, wolf hunger and wolf anger. The man brings a water gun filled with ammonia. "Get 'em in the eyes," he says. "That's the way to do it." Packs of blind, wild, hungry wolf dogs prowl the morning streets, not knowing what they want or where to look for it. Their hungers leap and stretch, set the moon on fire. The man jogs in peace.
4. My white clothes will not wash clean, in the broken toilet. If I burned all of my guilt and shame, what would I live on?
5. Tell me, please, what that man is doing in jail. Who put him there, and why?
6. He died at home then, in his sleep. The family was there to shepherd his soul to the proper heaven: a file cabinet that swung down from the ceiling, full of colored folders stuffed with incidents, and events, that would never be looked at again.
7. Who are these strangers? I'm not at their party, but they're sharing news with me. Blessed events to come, tiny baby bumps under shiny clothes. And there are two classmates, who I thought died on 9/11, but I was wrong. Or was I? They look completely different.
8. My teeth fall out again, burning, one by one.
9. Whoever "we" were, we took in a movie called One Solitary Life. "That book was melodramatic," I told the unknown companion, "but I loved it in my teens." It was about Jesus, but now I'm overwhelmed at work.
10. Another loyal dog. Whatever job I'm given, I will do.
11. Zoo animals let loose on the street. What a delight!
12. I forget the dream from which I never want to wake.

