

# The Watch

*by* Linda Simoni-Wastila

After the wolves killed the sheep, then Damien, I fled the backcountry. Without cricket and tree frog song, the silence grew too deep.

I packed light: food for a lifetime, clothes and boots, and all the guns. One photo of my love, sewn into the pocket over my heart. The audio of our poetry.

On the last night, I siphoned 30 gallons of ethanol to power the ATV, and sloshed the rest around the perimeter of the house, the shed, the still. The timber flared with a loud wumph. The wolves gathered, mesmerized by the flames. Their low snarls trailed me as I drove from the forest, the evening star obscured by smoke.

It took three days to reach the City. From the top of the tower, I watched the horizon. The tinny pop of guns from the last of the resistance punctuated the low whine of advancing tanks. For some reason, these noises comforted me.

