

Moon collar

by Steven Pirani

It was snowing when my dog decided he would die.
My mother says he just curled up in the powder and looked at the moon.

I wasn't there, I was at school,
but I like to imagine that right then, the light narrowed on him,
like a monologue, with no words.

I don't think dogs like to die with the pack.
The smell of them rotting brings trouble in the wild,
which is beautiful, pragmatic,
not sparing us grief, only danger.

They got him inside, and he lived for two more months,
a tumor like a softball, mangling his steps.
I wonder how he felt, betraying his instinct,
if it had been something brave, or if he even knew of bravery at all.

Like I said, I wasn't there, but I do sometimes see it, if I try:
Him, a black comma on the driveway,
a gap in the white of the snow and two eyes,
and my mother, standing at the door, calling him, over and over.

I do not know if he got up himself,
or if they carried him in,
and I do not know which I prefer.

