

BECAUSE

each autumn she runs the yucca-clustered hills,
this ancient grassland full of prickly pear and prairie rose,
ranging ahead, casting left and right,
reveling in the scents, as meadowlarks
and mourning doves lift up and out of reach,
deer and coyotes slip away unseen, and
jackrabbits challenge her to open-country races
we all three know she can't win,
but know too she has to follow, because

out here, away from the common
chaos of the streets in the city where we live,
she can hear again a voice within
calling her back to her birthright,
the uncluttered wild, where everything is
a simple coupling, predator and prey,
every scent a call to grace—*Follow me*—
and nose down, tail aquiver,
without question she obeys, because

this way is narrow and she knows
it leads to the holy of holies,
the eternal present, where she locks on point,
silent, motionless, eye-to-eye,
pointer and sharptail a single being
lost in timeless meditation
before the inevitable sacrifice—a grouse
bursts skyward, my dog leaps after, and I
wake from this trance and raise the gun, because