

Mary Quade

AN EPISODE OF MOOSE

This loneliness is nothing compared to moose.
Antlers like hands mid-clap, a body's volume,
the inexecutable bending of knees.
I have encountered moose, inconsolable
and dusty, drooping from a lodge wall
into air close with pancakes,
smoked wool, the unwashed parts of men;
zoo moose on concrete, ink-blot shadows,
austere among zebras, the anomalous apes
swinging, climbing, swinging.
I have witnessed a wake of moose penetrating water,
heads disembodied by moon;
sudden moose in dense forest
from another order of magnitude;
mother and young, fibrous, impersonating wood,
fading into lake vapors.
Stupid desolation—my empty room, dark street, silence—
I have followed a lovesick bull catapulted through birch
by a violent affinity, head fat with grief.
He mutilated the woods
with declarations of belligerent love.