

Hide

Those creatures that turn white in the snow,
mountain hare, the stoat, arctic fox
pale as the ground he streaks across,
bring to mind others of their kin,
swans spelled from their human skin,
deer blanched to ghost by *leucism*. You'd follow him
into the hushed white middle of the wood
to see if he'd dissolve as hoar frost does when touched
but he's always a length in front, a shimmered dot
like Grimshaw's *Woman in the Snow*,
or your mother in the fractured light
of granny's road- you miles behind on leaden feet,
although the story where she leaves is in the note
propped on the mantle shelf when you're fourteen;
your poems sleep inside the dream whose deer's
a swan, mouth stretched to sing,
its broken arm a trailing wing that spills
four spots of dark blood on the frozen ground.
And swans will grieve their withered skin,
ghost deer bleed red as any living thing ,
mother go but never leave; a woman
who one night slips on her winter coat,
white high heels and taps out of the silent street
into your poems ice and snow.