



FOX ABANDON

Awakening to the motion
detectors going off in the barnyard

is not anything new
but detecting motion within those

parameters is, sensing
there was something more to it

than the feral barn cat stalking
rodents. Raising the shade,

the fox must have heard me, or
seen my reflection in the window;

and it wasn't as if I didn't
have to exercise patience, knowing

how long the lights stay on
out there, aware that because they

stayed on, something slinked
in the shadows of hedge or barn.

When she appeared
in her regal red finery, not without

decorum, her tail nearly as long
as she was; the whimsical,

wry smile; the ears perked;
her exquisite gait that of a dancer,

her legs and feet propelling her
smoothly across the ground

in more of a glide than a trot
or a brisk bound, as she ran to

the peaked shadows
and between them, darting from

one point to another, possibly
running down a mouse, before

cavorting into the winter grass
north of the barn, the brilliance of

her coat catching different tones
of color, from a glistening blonde

to a wizened fox red, in the glare
of the spotlights, as she

eventually sprinted into
the darkness several hours before

the early spring dawn, which
would break over the ridge

she must have tracked over
by then, igniting the full palette

of her coat, as if she
had dragged it behind her across

the hills, and it caught on
the edge of the treeline, lighting up

the edge of the sky with a color
as bright as her quickness.

by Wally Swist