



Foreboding Joy

We go walking as the night awakens
the desert, your four footfalls landing

softer than my two human kind—
which is the way of animals since the dawn

of time. We listen to the quail chattering
their way home, to the cool air skimming

our skin, to the coyotes calling
one another close. My mother says

pets are a heartbreak waiting to happen,
and those words rustle in my ears

as the yips and yowls surround us.
Sometimes monotony reveals itself

as peace after it is punctured.
Won't this coyote chorus be the sound

of my love when your shadow moves away
from mine, when you pass into light?

Their calamitous little cries, their attempts
to make a blood-red sky hear them, their ruinous

music. Ruins meaning there was something
to behold. Music as the sound of a life being lived.

— Annalise Parady