

[MJTM 24 (2022–2023) 33–35]

*SUNRISE AND MOONSET:
THE LORD BEHIND AND BEFORE*

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Like out in the wilds
enduring a whole year of camping
out in the wilds she's brrr-cold despite the best
down bag Every morn squirming into jeans
sweatshirt & socks hating to leave
that tent the warm sack breakfast sizzling

over tinder and sparks That is until one day
a new dawn shrugs
says *Time* to go
And no no fire this morning

No more fire
She's told *Stand in the light*
So that's what she does Stands Faces the sun

Her beloved turns the other way
Keeping an eye on dubious shadows
he readies for the unknown facing
the depth of darkness edging his whole being
into the uncharted
hoping to God he has her back
Hoping like hell God has his

1. Susan Cowger's third book, *Hawk & Songbird* (Cascade), will be released in 2024. Others include *Slender Warble* (Cascade [2020]) and a chapbook *Scarab Hiding* (Finishing Line [2006]). Poems have appeared in many journals and anthologies.

COYOTE ALIVE

I saw coyote again loping
through the brume as if
unwavering wind was on his side That is
until he saw the walkers of dawn
and had to choose

between man afoot
and the narrow path between houses
One day I suppose someone
will trap or shoot him all bravado
and pride Who in the world
wants wild hope stuffed & dusty
hunkered down in the den But there I am

at the window every morning
scanning dawn
for untamed movement a nod of wind
feral fear giving hope
another chance to be lithe

TRANSFIGURATION

I wonder if he arrives early
and sees the children
scatter and scour the bookshelves and floor
Under beds behind the piano the littles
whisper to each other *Where is it?*
Where IS it? The book That one you know the one
One sofa two cushions too crowded
for everyone to have a good seat I wonder
if he is surprised how long his stories hold the children
gazing straight ahead Imagine
coaxing them into a furious climb joining
the unflinching scale casting off rope & axe

As a last resort suspending all disbelief
Somewhere near the top

ahead of them he stops

their mouths open
As if this is the final switchback
every child turns from the pages to look at his face
watch

and there it is How long did it take
to hear again his baritone
from the edge of the world

Do not be afraid