

Not So Very Long Ago

Linda Hogan

This is the valley that was occupied by wolves,
it was said.

I was at the table.
I was drinking dark coffee,
thinking of the wolves
that lived in this valley
and I do not lie when I tell you
I dreamed them the night before,
stealthy as they are,
faces quiet, moving slowly, like ghosts,
they with first title to this land
of many titles.

I was with friends
drinking coffee and we ate some bread
in this place where blue birds nest,
the place where wolves lived
not that long ago.

Some men came to this place,
That's what they say,
and that the men never came out
of the hills or valley
after they killed the wolves.
They turned from human flesh
into water, into thin air, into someone, something unknown
waiting for rain to fall
and when it did, they sank into the ground,
all because they killed the wolves
so beautiful beyond the shallows of this river
where I sit alone now
with a glass of wine before me,
the coffee all gone.

It is morning now and the leaves of trees
rustle in the wind, in this place
that was the land of wolves.
I am still sitting in the early morning,
thinking of wolves
in a place suddenly different
in all its animal silence.