

BRIAN SNEEDEN

## *Origins*

At the pollen line  
where the belly of the coyote drags  
its chain of meat

in tick-smeared grass,  
snout wet  
from throat, fur

I lick with my tongue  
as rehearsal for eating  
what I love. There is no place

but mouth  
for opening the animal  
by the curve

of its name.  
In a worry of jacarandas  
a deer shape

bleeds into the field  
with its cage  
of self

and self-sensing,  
watches from the otherside  
of reeds that border

sleep that borders  
what I cannot allow,  
its eyes hovering in field

I carry always like an amulet,  
like a branch simultaneously  
burned

and burning, the smell  
of ozone  
and chrysanthemums. The ember

that passed through my voice  
seeded cities—ellipses  
and salt.

## *Season of Echoes*

I came to a mirror in the road and passed through it, painlessly. Almost without noticing. A change of wind. Nothing rustled. I peeled a leaf from the air. Then everything started again, and I walked forward, back to the village. All of it was the same, down to the last detail, except that somewhere a window was missing or a bird that hadn't yet been invented began to sing. In the root-spurt, strands of verbena stuck to wet clay, a blackbird picked fleece from a nude patch of field. Days passed, and I couldn't sleep for wondering which was the reflected world.