

BEAUTY AND THE HUSBAND

He had a few hairs on his chest,
enough to get her fingers in, and tug.
He had strong white teeth, a nice smile,
but it took a lot to make him roar.

He was still as softly-spoken, polite,
as when he was a massive, shaggy beast.
Then, she'd been thrilled by the contrast;
the mystery behind the fur and claws.

She remembered the soft, heavy thud
of his paws approaching her room at night,
the huge shadow thrown by the candle,
his bulk looming politely over her.

He still walked softly, with grace;
still held himself in check. Ornaments,
china, were safe in his proximity.
She had to be really nasty to get a snarl.

She'd only seen him hunting once, by chance,
before they'd been introduced. It was dusk.
His long, tawny body moved with fluid grace.
The deer's fragility broke like a vase.

When he looked up, suddenly, towards her,
he had blood around his mouth. She thought,
he could catch me in seconds, bite me in two.
He stared for a long moment, as if to memorise her.

He sleeps peacefully, like a gentleman.
Watching him, she wonders about his dreams.
Somewhere, in there, is he still prowling for game?
She is restless, wanders barefoot at night, watchful.

She wants to ask him, "What was it like?"
and for the answer to go on for days.
She wants to wring the subject dry.
He doesn't want to talk about it.

She visited the zoo. He changed the subject.
Next time, she doesn't tell him.
She really wants to interview the big cats;
the predators; "How do you feel about that now?"

She makes sympathetic, yearning, eye contact,
and the large, liquid eyes look back, contemptuous.
Just another curious tourist.
She needs to get closer, much closer