

Feast of Epiphany

Coyote leaves a squirrel on the back porch
in two mounds like cairns—fur to the west, bones

to the east, points on a map
to an invisible world. Or a warning—the border

between inside and outside, warmth and wildness
thinner than we imagined, death approaching

in matted gray and brown pulsing in the wind
like a hairy lung breathing down the door,

or settling in delicate, chalky lines like a letter
fallen in on itself. Weeks pass

before I bury the carcass, lifting it with a shovel
and laying it in the shadow

of a barren hydrangea, my kids squealing through
the French doors, half terrified, half delighted.

The remains weigh nothing. I barely perceive
the clink as they drop, their song a hymn

the ground devours. *O God, I whisper, folding*
earth over empty skin, parched bone. I hunger.

—John Alba Cutler