

NELLE

Jane Satterfield

Fox

First stars in a milky sky, fog
sifting branches and the fox

is interloper, is fur of russet
and iron, is light-footed, is real

in my alley—no emblem trickster
or guide, vision appearing at no one's

command, only to vanish through
some ragged hedge, flicking that full tail

the hunter calls "brush."

Distant as dreamland

that long-gone afternoon
on the Long Walk at Windsor

where costumed riders in scarlet jackets
and velvet safety helmets streamed by,

crops held firm in hand. In lore,
in legend, and in hunt practice, initiates

were marked when the quarry was caught,
their foreheads smeared in the ceremony

of blood. Stashed in a cupboard
somewhere, the bone china

tea mug I was given is emblazoned
with images of the hunt, its inked tableau

of horse and hound a hand-held pageant
of staged artistry, raw impulse tamed

and brought inside.

Compatriot

*of shrinking spaces, you come nearer,
weaving your way past digging machines*

*and dog parks, to extend an empire
among us, alert and unleashed,*

*traveling through
twin kingdoms of dusk and dawn.*