

ATMA FRANS

WE THOUGHT IT WAS JUST RUMOURS

After Sue Goyette

We did not notice Its arrival. It came by plane sipping champagne, on a cruise ship dancing under the full moon, in the back seat of a Honda eating greasy fries. Then It went owl on us.

It swooped down on our town. In the morning, bodies were everywhere. We called in trainers of unruly dogs. *Name It*, they said. *Make It listen when you call*. That night, It swallowed more.

A group of mountain hikers recommended noise and pepper spray. We clapped, banged pots, played violin duets on balconies. It burped, flew down again.

That's when we called in the scientists. They said we had destroyed Its habitat, encroached on It with cities, factories, and all our little gardens. We emptied our squares, highways, and the sky.

The world grew silent. We thought It would perch on a lone tree and be content. Instead we found It in our homes, stretched out on our sofas, drinking martinis, clicking the remote.

It now looked like us. We hid inside. We made sourdough and pie, discovered crafts and glitter glue. It grew shiny scales, mirrors in which we saw our inequalities.

We let our hair grow long in shame. We toppled statues of old heroes. We learned to listen to a child. We dreamed up a better world, a world in which we were together. It retreated into a corner.

Look, we said. We named It, studied It, It's ours now. We lit fireworks, held races in the square, hugged strangers in the moonlight. It glided over everything, ignoring us, collecting twigs.