

ROBERT NAZARENE

THE OLD MAN'S HOUNDS

Hooves, fur, horns didn't fool us. We knew his scent almost before it hit us. The undertones of swagger and Seagrams. For years we chased his quarry for him, one season into the next, our paws bleeding from thorns and thickets, and never once a *Good girl!* or a pat atop the head. If our brethren escaped he would drive his boot into our heaving underbellies or the softness of our snouts. He never even named us. We were ripe for rebellion and when we caught the whiff of his fear the wolves inside us sprang into action. His flesh opening like a kennel door.

THE POET CONVEYS HIS REGRET

She had a name,
a home made of marble,
impossible to miss.

Our months passed
quickly. Leaves flew
down from the lindens

& drowned in the pool.
Each new day
the skies

grew more leaden. It
snowed—& our laughter
emptied each room.

Then spring.
And her carefully
tended garden—

(Only the finest...)

came alive.

Infested with light,
I freely confess
how your absence

saddens me—
the soil sending
up violets—

I wear as tiny veils.