

D.S. Waldman

COYOTE

Like this, you say, and I watch you, mostly
a shadow, now,

 against the greater dark
of the orchard, reach with your free hand
for two more shells, which you slip clean
into the cracked

 open .22. And half of me,
waiting for what might, at the floodlight's
other end, surface, keeps

 wanting to imagine
you taking aim at some sadness by now
unacknowledged

 because barely, for all
these years, allowed to surface—though
understood, instinctively, as never
too far away.

You don't need camouflage,
one eye long down the barrel, now, *to kill*
a thing at night. The other half of me
keeps still, keeps

 waiting for the long exhale
that leads, always, to a broken silence.
But this isn't the dream

 where you lower
your rifle—where, after several cold
minutes, looking

 far into the dark, you
turn and hand the gun to me.