

On the Possibility of Unpossuming the Possum

by Richard Hague

Your naked tail disgusts and terrifies
at first: as if a rat has gone crazy
and gnawed away its own fur; but,
slowing to look,
I see the delicate skin,
the same color as an infant's
who smells of talcum powder and milk,
or the joy-blushed cheek of a nun,
or glowing gem-stuff,
pale coral.

Possum, might I find
in your linty pouch
a warm mitten,
in your filthy snout
some witty point,
in your scraggly fur
the windblown locks
of Botticelli's Spring?

In this obstinate world, long cleansed
of all shape-shifting.
I know you will remain
your lank, recalcitrant self,
shit-sniffer, poker of grubs and
worms, digger in
compost and dregs,
little slinker
shambling in and out
of my garage,
leaving scatters of scat
and half-eaten rinds,
dregs and drool
upon which I must
fall on hands and knees
in a kind of anti-worship,
to scrape and scrub
till it's clean.
Idle Men On Porches
No work in this universe,