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A Lamb Births a Tigress

She mirrored her kind at birth,
fuzzy cream and soft-nosed.
She grazed greens with her mother.
Like her mother's mother before her,
she learned to drink last, freeze

for steel inside the shrinking wire.
But exposed to wolves and snakes, to horns
of rams and mountain goats, she sheds
her fleece. Dark stripes tattoo
her back, the balding underbelly,
criss-cross her flattening face.

Pupils elongate, yellow
as she studies night's creatures,
masters her escape. With new fangs,
she tastes meat, life on her tongue.
Grown claws rip crawlers to shreds,
zigzag fur and flesh. She returns

to scent the earth under the tree
where her mother rests.
Her roar scatters circles of wolves,
the ruling rams and goats, while her sister
lifts brown eyes
from a patch behind barbwire.



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Pieces of Wood

The rooster's call finds me
in this kitchen chair as dawn begins.
And I think of Peter:

how the third crow made him wish
that night erased. He craved dirt

to take the taste of sawdust from his tongue.
Denial rusts the mouth, and when swallowed,
nailed-tight spikes stack from pit to throat.

I stare at this burnt-down wick. It floats
suspended in a pool of wax; its rose
scent fled an hour ago. I dip
my fingertips and roll
a pliant ball. Does changing form

retain essence? Without its legs,
this table would remain a wooden slab.
When Peter ran, the echo chased his shadow

into the parting sky. A glance
nailed reality to wood.
The rooster stopped his crow
and I, for once, will heed this call.

Alba Cruz-Hacker

Alba Cruz-Hacker was born in the Dominican Republic, and resides in Southern California with her husband and three children. She is completing a BA in Creative Writing- Poetry and plans to attend an MFA program. Some of her recent work appears in the on-line journal *Can We Have Our Ball Back*.