A DIFFERENT KIND OF MOTION

for Katelijne Vanduffel

The wolf-child creeps around the clearing

where children build a campfire. She hears

a new sound, laughter, cross talk. Upright

shapes jump blurred across the fire. But

they have dogs that smell her, so she can't

get near. After they run off she sniffs

the fruit skins, some colored paper they

left. She raises a paw, then tries to stand,

as she saw the children stand, but her rear

legs remain bent, she falls over and over

and over. She hitches away, in her crab-

like motion, fast as the rabbits she catches

and eats. From the edge of the forest

the wolf-child watches men hoe the fields.

They've begun to set traps for her. She

tries again, to stand, her front legs

on a tree trunk, leg over leg up the bark,

rearing up so the sun coming through

the leaves hits her muddaubed belly. Her

back legs hurt, like the day she tried to lope

after the wolves, before she came on hitching.

She falls away from the pain, with a grunt,

not the tinkling water sound of children

in her ears. In time she learns to hobble

leaning on a stick, and the wolf-child comes

on stage with a different kind of motion.