

## The 4<sup>th</sup> Reich

Only the animals  
Sense a tsunami coming  
Rocking earth felt from afar  
Mollusk's screams heard  
From the ocean's bottom  
The seam of the world splitting open  
Hot blood stirring animals to run, crawl, fly, scamper  
Towards higher ground  
Leaving humans smug and unknowing  
Of the earth

It could happen again

So the creatures must have known  
About the tsunami  
Of The Third Reich  
And the wake it would leave.  
Some of us know now  
The waves and wakes to come.

As a child

My mother read me the original bloody grim  
Stories from *The Grimm's Fairy Tales*  
"Why are fairy tales called that? None have fairies."  
I felt betrayed because I heard "Grim's Fairy Tales"  
So I kept listening for smiles.  
Instead women were bitter, children were beaten,  
Animals were bloodthirsty. No fairies.

It could happen again

I saw the fairy tale men behind my eyelids  
When I went to sleep – lurking and grabbing  
Tempting me with words and sweets but swiping at me  
When I expected it least  
I begged mom to read the other stories  
The ones with less hurting  
But instead she told me

How the Nazis  
Used the stories to promote hatred  
of Jews and non-Christians  
The wolves were the Jews  
The blonde girls the Germans  
I only understood the Jewish part  
Not how she said:

It could happen again

So I ran to my best friend's 4 houses away  
Asked if she knew any Nazis  
She pushed me out the door,  
Slammed it behind both of us.  
"Not that word! Not in our house!"

I wanted to hear all the stories  
And wanted to hear none of them  
I wanted the truth and I wanted none  
Then I had to read Anne Frank in 9<sup>th</sup> grade  
And asked endless questions, like "Why triangles?"  
My teacher was patient and grim and explained:

It could happen again

Even with the guts of pigs and the teeth of wolves  
And the ravaging of Rapunzel  
And the swords above girl's heads  
And the taking of their innocence

I plunged in  
To that tsunami of fascism - fiction and facts  
Fright fueling me into more stories  
Hearing, reading, writing, holding them  
Entering that time when lives were picked up by the wave of hate

As if stories read and written would immunize me  
And I would never feel the tsunami alongside the animals  
Writing my way into salvation  
Or so I believed  
And now  
The animals know

It is happening again