

The 4th 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 9th 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