

CATHERINE OWEN

## Street-dog (Vancouver/01)

—For Matthew

She was the black shape your innocence took—how long on the streets—this Hades of half-cut, take-out, dead-end days squatting by the Figmart with thin, insistent arias—*can you spare some change*. She sat firm at your feet—a figurehead on the street's Ship of Fools or snailed around your cup on the rag, drab square of a blanket.

A dog dreams your final Ararat, the olived land you still someday long for at the clink of each coin's sound, hum of junk's burnt veins, cold's jolt through the spine like Hydra. I saw her once—lapping the apertures of your wounds, she doctor at it and gentle, or another time I watched you dance with her, girlish and tender—her tail knowing Elvis, assuagement, the pariah night.