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The Dog

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THE DOG

This dog which walks beside me
or seems to
and which seems barely constrained
by the chain
and which is indeed barely constrained
and which perhaps is not at all led by me
but which is leading me instead
stopping here to sniff a flower
stopping there to paw the ground
I have named My Life
or the life which I wish I had lived

having been born as usual
with little energy
and only the accustomed hungers
and who would have settled for anything
and indeed for many years has done exactly that
but who secretly craved
the great lunge of flesh
the morning of appetite
which never subsides

has poetically or logically
acquired this vastest beast
who walks beside me now
or seems to
placing one then two gentle paws down
but who seems always too on the verge
of breaking free
tearing off through the hedge
or up the hillside where the fragile children
play at their marbles and kites

and who at night
halfway into your dreams
you have heard howling at some moon.
Terrible, terrible,
you mutter,
and try to walk away,
as I have tried.