Two Poems

Don Schofield

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HOWLING MAN AND HIS YOUNG

from an Eskimo sculpture

I
Howling Man no longer roams
frozen fields, at night
no longer measures mouth
against black expanse
for Howling Man no longer has
mouth, teeth, snout. His young
bulge from his cheeks
wet, stiff-lipped, green like clay
or fresh grass; they sleep

curled amid she-wolves and lap dogs
serpents crackling in the fire.

II
A man of quiet concerns,
I go through the day my hands
behind my back, fill the spaces
left by others.
My young are still inside
lodged between my legs.
Sometimes I hold them in my hands
feel their flesh wrinkle
the grating of hairs
the shuffling of bodies.

III
Nights, a new moon rolls
in my sleep, yellow galleons
course through my chest
black hairs
stroke the liquid night

like upturned legs.
There is a breathing
inside my breathing
a listening beneath my listening;
I awake and hear a howl
rising to my green tongue:
the voice of my young
shattering the night
the voice of my young
like blank bullets

at a black mirror.

WE MEN WEEP

with our eyes closed, our women gone
to bed, a single light on,
every door closed. For us
it remains the same,
tired face, tired hands, same words
in the throat: "regret" "confusion"
"I'm fine" "life is good." We weep
like the birch willow,
awed at ourselves, our strange mixture,
our ability to die without roots
one day to the next.