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FEVER 104

This elusive little beast isn't fooling me
with its cold/hot breath,
its shivery black silverness caressing
me pale and tender. Popping out of its lair,
it ripples over my ribs, a fur boa teasing
some perverse audience my rheumy eyes
can't see. Mouth filled with surgical tools
for slipping beneath skin and muscle,
its lancets pause here and there
to strop on bone.

I suspected the dreaded basilisk
when that flicking stickiness tongued over me
at daybreak. Until I noticed
its undulating form was lightweight,
less than ugly, slenderly sensual, softly mean.
Warm blooded grace shapes its intentions. This
is not the basilisk once thought unkillable,
but the basilisk's own slayer, the weasel.

Whiskers and tail tickle me sicker,
needle claws accent the dance-and-dart ballet
up my vertebrae. My hidebound act
vacillates between stupor and tightrope walking
while juggling my heart, liver and spleen.

Still, I know what's taking place:
The weasel, live coal eyes level with mine,
sniffs toward my brain.
It waits for certain major chords
to reverberate through dividing cells
before lighting the ultimate fire.

--Glenna Holloway