NIGHTMARE

The steamed-up bathroom mirror resists

wiping with her terry towel. It will

not reflect her face. She persists, and her

determined, expert strokes clear it suddenly.

Uncovering a forest path, across which

stranded waves of brown pine needles guide

a horned advent of snails after rain.

She has to run — feels/hears the home-wrecking

squash. She freezes. A slimy snail

begins to crawl up her other leg. And

as she raises her eyes, the fox, black band

across his tan ears, quietly moves off

not in his smooth regal canter, but like

a cat that he isn't, bounding away.

She cannot run.

She cannot stand still,

and wakes to soft rain on her roof window.