

The dog considers

a comma-shaped smear left
on the concrete, a wet swirl
from the leaking garbage can.
A colorless soup I should hose away.

Her dripping nostrils widen, her front
paw lifts, delicately, at the stain's edge.
She has been arrested from her patrol
of our property, her eyes closed halfway.

The needle pulls away from the record
on the stereo with a cottony shush, just
as the wind changes and pulls gently
across the shallow puddle. Her whiskers tremble.

This week we held a dinner party that slid
into the weak hours of morning. Bones
slipped between our guests' fingers, over
and over, and wine soaked into paper napkins.

Ice melted into the pink shells of shrimp, butter
hardened around artichoke petals, the cigarettes
smoldered everywhere. The sun steams off
her back and the dark smell under her nose.

I remember, now, that she was shut inside
the still, cool basement, muzzled into the ground.
What she tastes, now, with the flat pink edge of her tongue,
must be the confirmation of some dream, something

she was sure could not have happened without her.