The animals in that country

By Margaret Atwood

In that country the animals have the faces of people:

the ceremonial cats possessing the streets

the fox run politely to earth, the huntsmen standing around him, fixed in their tapestry of manners

the bull, embroidered with blood and given an elegant death, trumpets, his name stamped on him, heraldic brand because

(when he rolled on the sand, sword in his heart, the teeth in his blue mouth were human)

he is really a man

even the wolves, holding resonant conversations in their forests thickened with legend.

In this country the animals have the faces of animals.

Their eyes flash once in car headlights and are gone.

Their deaths are not elegant.

They have the faces of no-one.
Born in Ottawa, Canada, Margaret Atwood is one of the most prominent literary figures of her country. She has published prolifically in several genres, including over 10 novels, six collections of stories, and 15 books of poetry. The recipient of numerous awards, Atwood wrote Morning in the Burned House, published in 1995, which was a co-winner of the Trillium Award.

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