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.

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