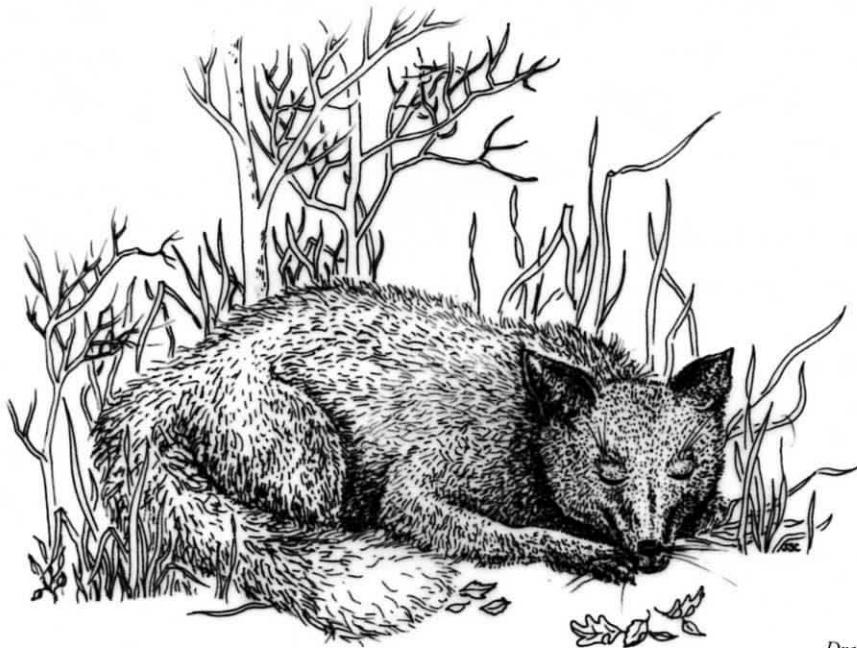


# Fox

*Mary Kane*

What is a fox, anyway? *Vulpes vulpes*, tall-eared predatory pouncer of rabbits. Scornful dieter refraining from fabled grapes. A fox never devoured Red Riding Hood or her grandmother. A fox never howled or joined a pack, chasing down a Russian wedding party. Occasionally, last Sunday in fact, by a specific wooden bridge in Massachusetts, a fox running along a dirt road gets mistaken for a coyote by evening strollers. A fox, a man, a woman, a path. Night, clouds, honeysuckle. A little god might pick up these pieces with his little god fingers, set them in a cup, shake and spill them on the table like dice. A little god might order them for the sake of story, make the fox the protagonist. Dark night a source of conflict. The path an answer. Read the arrangement I Ching fashion.



*Drawing by Julia S. Child*

The path itself, paved into miniature highway, yellow line down the middle provides material enough for drama. Forces straining to manage a shoreline, a detailed history of town meetings, competing interests, bids by paving contractors and finally laborers in oil soaked boots and blue jeans raking asphalt and joking during coffee breaks. Even simply walking we are sometimes at odds with our host. Then throw in a man and a woman. Even without the dark night. Even without those voices that rise out of their blood and muscle and bone bodies. Even without four feet that find a common step. Let honeysuckle encircle them when they stop, sweet, invisible, rooted in its own dark. Let them for a few moments be of the scene, be scent, sea, cloud darkened sky, let them be the black earth where the honeysuckle feeds. And human too, open utterly and of their planet as humans are, for minutes here and there in rare constellations. Let them walk to the knife black edge and stop.

And now let a scrawny fox pass. Because at this point the fox has become a necessity. And the humans will startle themselves from their openness to notice the fox. To take a step back from each other. And consider it, the fox. The fox, stopping, notices them, sees nothing fearful, walks on. It could have been the story of a fox, hungry, nosing out rabbits. The people incidental. The path not mentioned, though the fox does indeed cross the path. It could have been the honeysuckle's tale, a dry spring, flowering early. The way scent travels in the dark. The honeysuckle doesn't fear its roots, its blossoms, the earth it holds. The stars don't care if they remain clouded. Even the paved path doesn't wake up, shivering and damp and acutely alien. It organizes. And conducts. The people, intent on felicity, reimagine the scene repeatedly from the fox backward. If what is most memorable about the fox is its scrawniness, it's only just lost its winter coat. The spring is fat with rabbits.

# Bike Ride in the Rain

*George Sethares*

Rain this morning.  
A soaking rain.  
I am drenched.

I continue riding:  
Salt Pond on my left,  
bikeway straight  
for nearly a mile.

A runner –  
approaching  
her hair black  
almost shoulder length  
white top  
shorts color of hair  
eyebrows black  
mascara  
perhaps.

Parting her lips she breathes in.  
Our eyes meet.  
“Hi!” she says.  
Her smile broadens.  
“Hi there!” I reply like a close friend

I want to mention the rain,  
the cool air, the breeze.  
She seems about to speak as we pass.