

## The Badger

commanding the conference room table  
directly across from me sits  
the badger

this is a rare thing  
a badger sighting  
at a meeting

usually, the badger  
sits behind a monitor  
and monitors  
a favorite tactic  
composing toxic email messages  
and with the stroke of the send key  
a nuclear explosion  
the perfect storm

sometimes  
after the dust settles  
the badger will emerge  
to survey the damage  
picking through the debris  
searching for any sparks of life  
devouring the young

but today  
the badger sits across from me  
flanked by a fox and a jackal  
dressed in a tailored suit  
glaring at me with beady eyes  
I can see the dark clouds of thunder  
brewing behind the scowl  
waiting for the precise moment  
to unleash a lightning bolt  
and strike me dead

what a sight to behold!  
the ferocity of a badger  
on the verge of a kill  
unfortunately, my dear,  
it takes two to tango

No longer playing this game

I vacate my seat, and in doing so  
the badger shifts focus  
to the next victim

a reign of terror  
floods the conference room  
until the window blinds  
are covered in spittle  
the coffee mugs overturned

I seek higher ground  
winding up the hillside  
others follow, tentatively  
until remembered confidence  
provides sure and stable footing

with a downward glance  
I notice that below and behind  
in the shadows  
the badger is left alone  
railing at their own reflection  
in the mirrored surface of  
the monitor