

## *Lunar Eclipse off Exit 88*

NELL SMITH

Somewhere in Oklahoma,  
speeding through scrubby darkness,  
    we pulled off the highway on Exit 88  
on our way East from the West,  
    our shadow slipping through the night.

Near to nothing, we stopped to shiver  
where grasses swayed and cities couldn't steal the sky,  
    somewhere in Oklahoma  
watching the moon turn to rust,  
    slivering away to nothing.

One of us knew the folklore—  
stories of the night wolf Hati,  
    insatiable in the thin air of winter,  
chasing the moon through a grassland of stars,  
    intent on consuming the heavens.

The Norse would have known this demon  
devouring the gleam of the moon.  
    They would have known  
to stamp and yell and pray,  
    to drive it back into darkness.

Feet fixed in the shadow of the sliver,  
we howled to the stars to bring back the moon.  
Lights blazed in passing,  
and we stood in the darkness off Exit 88,  
    watching the nothing grow.



Partial Lunar Eclipse (Wikicommons Public Domain)

---

Nell Smith is a field biologist and writer based in Northern Arizona. Much of her writing is ecologically rooted as she explores the interplay between people and place. She has been published or is forthcoming in *Thin Air Magazine*, *Entropy*, *Hawk & Whippoorwill*, *Sky Island Journal*, *Alligator Juniper*, and others.