

ALISON CROGGAN

BEFORE THE SHADOWS

Who skulked rotten in the rapier rushes?
Scaled with light in the water, who erupted
lustful as sunlight from the broken river?
— That was another self in another body,
thrusting life from my legs like a green frog kicking,
now refracted small beneath films of water,
unreal as mist.

I was young then.
In those sharp days edges were all clarity
and the brilliant morning held no bruises
and no half penumbras troubled me:
before the sly days
when I first noticed that my shadow followed me
careless in the tempered, vengeful grass
snapping back where I trod.