

# “The Curtain I Have Drawn for You”

by J.D. Isip

*Nellis AFB, 1994*

Half-a-dozen pairs of gold eyes refract the moon  
or the bug-smearred spot glowing against the nose and wing  
of my evening charge, an F-16 polished and loved  
to a gleam, even after midnight

They scuttle nearer, wide ears twisting, a curiosity  
both admirable and terrifying. I toss the ham sandwich to them,  
while my free hand flips the safety—ridiculous  
to draw my weapon, or think of it,

Facing a family of kit foxes, probably starving,  
no more dangerous than alley cats or New York rats, or fear  
you will be seen, you will forget yourself, disarm  
like Samson, at just the moment

All about you the harmless sharpen teeth and claws,  
whet with hiding fear, hunger, confusion at this unnatural  
body casting itself like bait, swift bodies swim after  
in the dark, only the gnashing tiny jaws

And the inevitable return of their eyes.

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**J.D. Isip's** full-length poetry collections include *Kissing the Wound* (Moon Tide Press, 2023) and *Pocketing Feathers* (Sadie Girl Press, 2015). His third collection, tentatively titled *I Wasn't Finished*, will be released by Moon Tide Press at the end of 2024 or early 2025. J.D. teaches at Collin College in Plano, Texas, where he lives with his dogs, Ivy and Bucky.