

Watching Taj Hamburger Listen to Music

Taj, the combination Corgi German Shepherd,
whose prolific head always makes me laugh
because he reminds me of Robert Reich,
seems to love the Bulgarian women's choir
performing in his living room. He splays
his front paws out to first position,
back legs flung behind, head to Persian rug,
every cell in his body a receptor of sound.
Taj drinks and drinks the accordion's wail,
the dissonant harmonies and drones of seven
strong women, as if he were born thirsty.

A toddler with a plan
keeps coming in and out
of the room, trying to feed Taj
a chew or a toy,
but the dog is concentrating
on Orfeia's songs of Bulgaria.
He's already devoted to Balkan village songs,
though he was rescued from a Florida ditch.
He knows ghosts cross borders,
knows looks can deceive.

Taj lies dreaming
of fields, as if music were
an unstoppable fence he could scale,
as if he weren't a dog at all
but a bird, a note, a mote
with desires. Without anyone noticing,
he scootches closer to the choir,
downing the sounds of eternity
with his perfect black snout,
inching closer and closer
to the buzzing tongue of the world.

Elizabeth Rees