**Office with Pike**

Joan Colby

A man comes weekly with hoses

To clean the aquarium. The giant pike

Fixes the owner with its green-gold eye,

A spectre of Hughes’ fierce muse

In the coldest water you can imagine.

It is illegal to keep game fish.

Another smaller tank holds goldfish.

They flit about, busy, busy, unaware

Of their destiny. He caught that pike up north,

Unable to resist the image of it lurking in these

Captive waters. No tank is big enough

To contain its submerged wrath.

This thought, of course, is dubious.

He knows the difference, how a pike

Must be oblivious. Though he likes to think

The pike watching him

Can be angry or chilled with admiration.

The vast desk encloses him with solid wings

Of endangered wood. Its surface clean

Of clutter. A boss needs no evidence

Of working like ordinary men

In shirt sleeves staring at their screens.

His fireplace, his sauna, his great leather chair,

His fingers itching for the oars

He pulled as a boy in those rough waters

Across the border. The balsam, birch

And eagles screaming. The pike

Hooked to his memories

Motionless in its enclosure

Gills opening and closing.