**Invasive Species**

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*These are terrible and fearefull to sight, and yet not hurtfull.*

 *—Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, 16th century*

A cold Florida winter knocked green iguanas off their trees

to be gathered from the sidewalks

and placed in commercial freezers for a painless death,

the reptile mind

winding down from tracking the light

overhead with its pineal eye

every cell slowing.

They never know they are dying,

these creatures looking oddly human

when splayed on their backs with four limbs extended

and soft bellies exposed to every cat or shoe.

Mostly their deaths are impersonal, a cleaning up

of animals who never belonged

within these borders

having been pets tossed

outdoors where they discovered

a wealth of greenery to eat—all our

flowers, shrubs, vegetables, and fruit

pickings from which they multiplied.

Burrowing under sidewalks, foundations, seawalls,

canal banks, they speed up

the general collapse of our lives

when the usual bit of planet under our feet

gets tricky. We can’t trust it

not to cave like souffle

or heave us somewhere,

we reptiles losing our grip.