**Wild Animals**

Sigrun Susan Lane

We lived with ibex, leopards,

wildebeests, bushboks, a kudu.

A sable in the kitchen.

In the hall, a caracal.

We had moved out —

while we were gone, the animals moved in.

Our home, a kind of mausoleum.

The mounted beasts cast shadows on our play.

Glass eyes stared into dead space,

to places we couldn’t see.

We ran below the great furred heads,

they dwarfed our small bodies.

No matter how loud we screamed,

they were silent, didn’t blink.

Their horns spiked the air,

like a bad dream in daylight.

Dad’s friend Bruce killed them all.

I didn’t like to think about their deaths

in the heat of an African afternoon,

the sound the leopard made when she dropped.

And the wildebeest. Bullet to the brain.

At night they padded upstairs to my room,

filled my head with visions of the savanna.

They dwelled a year or so with us,

then they were gone—

trophy hunters trucked them off, scraped

the walls clean of them.