

As if This Were Ordinary  
by Theresa McCourt

With the river to our right  
and the levee to our left,  
we women run along the trail.

The sky is still flat  
without the eastern sun's  
growing light on the day.

Near the bridge,  
we suddenly see her,  
standing hang-dog  
in the center of our path.

Without a spoken word  
we stop, surprised to see  
a mangy, underfed coyote.

Unlike ones I've seen in the past,  
she does not give us a lone, sideways glance,  
running a distant parallel from us humans.

Instead, she drops her haunch  
on the worn black asphalt, raises a back leg,  
and nibbles her rear with her small, sharp teeth.

When we move forward, able to  
take only a small curve of space  
around her, she nonchalantly rises—

And when I look back, she has  
resettled on the path's shoulder,  
busy with nibbling and scratching again.