

## Doomsday Dog

Two minutes till midnight on the Doomsday Clock  
said the morning scientists on the nuclear news,  
the closest the planet has come to Apocalypse  
since we played chicken with Khrushchev in Cuba.

To hike along the Potomac, I drove my daughter  
and our dog through a world frozen hard, the sun only  
a rumor of itself, but Bingo's tail whipping the backseat.  
If the world lasted that long, soon I'd be leaving again

for the work that took me away most of the year.  
We were listening to some of Rachel's music—  
I think "King and Lionheart"—and Bingo, a lion-  
hearted beast resembling a large white wolf, kept

reaching up to lick our faces, making us laugh with  
breath like a rotting carcass. The more we laughed  
the more he licked until we were stuck in a loop  
of licking and laughter, faces and guts hurting,

and I flooded with joy so immense it seemed to come  
from somewhere else. I knew I couldn't keep that afternoon,  
and who could say anything had changed? The clock  
was ticking. The river was frozen. But I cupped my hands

and drank and drank.