

## Bark: A Companion Piece

### Caius Buran

*He shall be straight condemned of heresy  
And on a pile of faggots burnt to death.*

—Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, Scene 8, lines 184-184

Gregor Samsa's on his bed and I—  
I am the blanket caught in the plates of his exoskeleton  
He rolls in me, and I'm filth, I'm filth, I'm filth.

Frankenstein's son has lit a fire and I—  
I am the flame that dances in the embers  
He thrusts into me, and I'm foul, I'm foul, I'm foul.

Grendel stalks the hall of Heorot and I—  
I am one of thirty thanes he devours  
He splits me open, and it's futile  
On his tongue, I die a thousand happy deaths  
In his stomach, I fizzle.

**Buran | Floodwall**

*Along the gutters, shapeless, fagged,  
With drooping head and bleeding feet, [. . .]  
For, drunk or dead, the street's the bed  
Where dogs and bums must sleep and die.*  
—Arturo Giovannitti, "The Bum," lines 7-8, 23-24

Fondly, I kiss your snout. My whiskers tickle against your wet nose.

Soon, we will rise, and I will pour us each a bowl of kibble.  
We will frolic in our fenced in backyard (not too loud),  
And then you will head to work, and so will I.  
We will pull on our human gloves,  
Our human suits,  
Our human masks,  
And leave in separate cars.  
In the evening, you will ask, like you always do,  
Why I'm so scared, why we must hide  
And I will not have an answer.

Thankfully, the alarm hasn't yet rung. We are in bed, and we are dogs together.

**Caius Buran** is a McNair scholar pursuing a bachelor of arts in English and certificates in creative writing and classical studies at the University of North Dakota. His free time is spent starring on and creating for *9mm Retirement Radio*, an actual-play podcast, and doting on his dog, two cats, and ball python.