

## **The Wereman (1970)**

**By Margaret Atwood (Canada)**

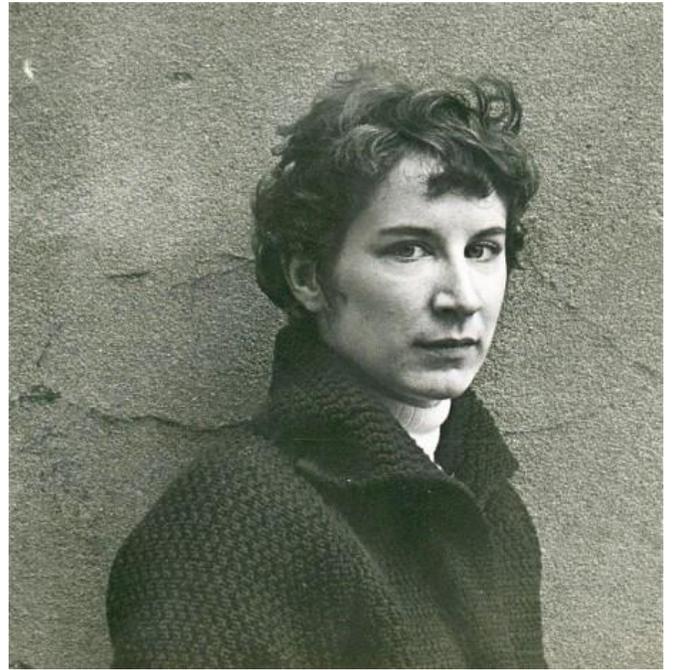
My husband walks in the frosted field  
an X, a concept  
defined against a blank;  
he swerves, enters the forest  
and is blotted out.

Unheld by my sight  
what does he change into  
what other shape  
blends with the under,  
growth, wavers across the pools  
is camouflaged from the listening  
swamp animals

At noon he will  
return; or it may be  
only my idea of him  
I will find returning  
with him hiding behind it.

He may change me also  
with the fox eye, the owl  
eye, the eightfold  
eye of the spider

I can't think  
what he will see  
when he opens the door



Margaret Atwood  
born 1939

## **Werewolf Movies (1986)**

**By Margaret Atwood (Canada)**

Men who imagine themselves covered with fur and sprouting  
fangs, why do they do that? Padding among wet  
moonstruck tree trunks crouched on all fours, sniffing  
the mulch of sodden leaves, or knuckling  
their brambly way, arms dangling like outsized  
pajamas, hair all over them, noses and lips  
sucked back into their faces, nothing left of their kindly  
smiles but yellow eyes and a muzzle. This gives them

pleasure, they think they'd be  
more animal. Could then freely growl, and tackle  
women carrying groceries, opening  
their doors with keys. Freedom would be  
bared ankles, the din of tearing: rubber, cloth,  
whatever. Getting down to basics. Peel, they say  
to strippers, meaning: take off the skin.  
A guzzle of flesh  
dogfood, ears in the bowl. But  
no animal does that: couple and kill,  
or kill first: rip up its egg, its future.  
No animal eats its mate's throat, except  
spiders and certain insects, when it's the protein  
male who's gobbled. Why do they have this dream then?  
Dress-ups for boys, some last escape  
from having to be lawyers? Or a  
rebellion against the mute  
resistance of objects: reproach of the  
pillowcase big with pillow, the tea-  
cosy swollen with its warm  
pot, not soft as it looks but hard  
as it feels, round tummies of saved string in the top  
drawer tethering them down. What joy, to smash the  
tyranny of the doorknob, sink your teeth  
into the inert defiant eiderdown with matching  
spring-print queensized sheets and listen to her  
scream. Surrender.

## **Update on Werewolves (2012)** **By Margaret Atwood (Canada)**

In the old days, all werewolves were male.  
They burst through their bluejean clothing  
as well as their own split skins,  
exposed themselves in parks,  
howled at the moonshine.  
Those things frat boys do.

Went too far with the pigtail yanking--  
growled down into the pink and wriggling  
females, who cried Wee wee  
wee all the way to the bone<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> an allusion to the child's nursery rhyme:

This little piggy went to the market,



Heck, it was only flirting,  
plus a canid sense of fun:  
See Jane run!

But now it's different.  
Now it's a global threat.  
Long-legged women sprint through ravines  
in furry warmups, a pack of kinky  
models in sado<sup>2</sup> French Vogue<sup>3</sup> getups

and airbrushed short-term memories,  
bent on no-penalties rampage.

Look at their red-rimmed paws!  
Look at their gnashing eyeballs!  
Look at the backlit gauze  
of their full-moon subversive haloes!  
Hairy all over, this belle dame<sup>4</sup>,  
and it's not a sweater.

O freedom, freedom and power!  
they sing as they lope<sup>5</sup> over bridges,  
bums to the wind, ripping out throats  
on footpaths, pissing off brokers.

Tomorrow they'll be back  
in their middle-management black  
and Jimmy Choos<sup>6</sup>  
with hours they can't account for  
and first dates' blood on the stairs.  
They'll make some calls: Goodbye.  
It isn't you. I can't say why.  
They'll dream of sprouting tails  
at sales meetings,  
right in the audiovisuals.  
They'll have addictive hangovers  
and ruined nails.

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This little piggy stayed home,  
This little piggy had roast beef,  
This little piggy had none,  
And this little piggy cried wee wee wee all the way home.

<sup>2</sup> a London fashion house dealing in high-end clothing

<sup>3</sup> a fashion magazine

<sup>4</sup> French: beautiful lady

<sup>5</sup> run or move with a long bounding stride

<sup>6</sup> Jimmy Choo: a Malaysian Chinese fashion designer, best known for his high-end women's shoe designs