

# Fox

by Adrienne Rich

I needed fox Badly I needed  
a vixen for the long time none had come near me  
I needed recognition from a  
triangulated face burnt-yellow eyes  
fronting the long body the fierce and sacrificial tail  
I needed history of fox briars of legend it was said she  
had run through  
I was in want of fox

And the truth of briars she had to have run through  
I craved to feel on her pelt if my hands could even slide  
past her body slide between them sharp truth distressing  
surfaces of fur  
lacerated skin calling legend to account  
a vixen's courage in vixen terms

For a human animal to call for help  
on another animal  
is the most riven the most revolted cry on earth  
come a long way down  
Go back far enough it means tearing and torn endless  
and sudden  
back far enough it blurts  
into the birth-yell of the yet-to-be human child  
pushed out of a female the yet-to-be woman

From Fox (WW Norton & Co., 2001)