



**Iowa State University**

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**From the Selected Works of Debra Marquart**

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# Marquart\_Des Moines Register\_Gratitude with Dogs Under Stars\_Dec 2021.pdf

Debra Marquart, *Iowa State University*



Available at: <https://works.bepress.com/debra-marquart/84/>

# 'Gratitude with Dogs Under Stars,' by Iowa poet laureate Debra Marquart as state marks 175th anniversary

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Debra Marquart, poet laureate of Iowa. *Special To The Register*

## Gratitude with Dogs Under Stars

*Ames, IA (42.034534, -93.620369)*

bless this night    bless  
                  the small bladders of dogs  
                                  urgent under moonlight.

bless raccoon and her brothers,  
                  those masked three a.m. bandits  
                                  who lowered themselves

on branches of viburnum  
with their eerie five-fingered hands  
into the dumpster scavenging

melon rinds burger wrappers  
tossing oily tuna cans to pavement  
with a chime that pricked the ears

of my sleeping lhasas. these litter mates  
bred to guard monasteries  
who warned me awake tonight.

bless their low ruff and whine  
and, now awake even bless the scramble  
for boots coats leashes propelled

into this obsidian night under rich midnight blue Iowa skies.  
crisp exhale of breath puffed into clouds.  
above us all velvety stillness sirius

a twinkling beacon  
in a stippled southern sky.  
castor and pollux those star twins

throwing their geminid tracers—  
like scattershot pin pricks of radiance into darkness.  
above us, this ancient afterimage

of violence—exploded stars billions of years ago—  
their light always moving toward us.  
from this blessed place on earth

let us witness their brilliance going.  
we fortunate mortals on the ground  
living amongst terrestrials

who sniff and paw the dirt  
who kick back their legs  
and growl at the darkness.

above us—  
so much deadly light  
to wish upon.