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## A Furrier's Grandchild

Paulann Petersen

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*Paulann Petersen*

## A Furrier's Grandchild

Once I'd taken my first step,  
my grandfather made me  
a fur coat and matching hat.  
White cony. My grandmother made  
the lining. Pale satin to lie  
between the pelt's napped underside  
and my skin. In a year, I would  
outgrow that cony coat.  
But there would be others, each  
just my ascended size. And hundreds  
of customers' coats—the chinchilla,  
mink, and Persian lamb  
I later tried on  
in front of the fur shop's  
triptych mirror. Their length  
dragging the floor, their sleeves  
overtaking my wrists and hands.

Each time I entered  
an animal's skin, I could feel  
the soft clutch of its death.  
Cool. Sleek. Gleaming.

I stroked  
that terrible beauty.

Each time the animal let me peel it  
away from my shoulders, let me  
return its fallen weight to hang  
from the rack's steel bar,  
I was reborn.