

MEG THOMPSON

NEW COMPANIONS COMING SOON

I find myself
at the pet store,
bent at the waist
reading how to care
for Leopard Geckos.
Origin: Pakistan.
Great starter lizard.
Eats crickets
dusted with calcium,
side-step
to the Russian Tortoises,
gray faces crinkled as linen,
they would add slow
life to my apartment,
poker chips of carrots.
Some tanks barren,
a sign reassures:
New companions
coming soon.
Crouching lower,
thighs tight from yoga,
the Central American
Boa Constrictor eats
a defrosted rodent, and yet
I'm drawn to snakes,
cable cords of bodies,
especially the baby
corn snakes, candy pink
with red-hot eyes,
some asleep in braids,
some awake

winding like taffy through
a miniature tree where
their skin peels off
to hang like sheer,
crisp tinsel. A boy
walks up next to me,
touches their glass tank
with one finger.
Wearing a Sturgis t-shirt
he has white-blond hair,
slick-shorn to the scalp
like lamb's wool.
Gross,
he whispers.