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Dana Sonnenschein

# WINTER'S ORPHAN





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This Siberian pup has slept,  
sprawled on his belly, chin resting  
against frozen earth, ice crystals  
in his whiskers and lashes,  
for 18 thousand years.  
But the permafrost melts.  
Yakutsk sinks, and the banks  
of the Lena are washed away.

His fur, soaked, dries in tufts,  
mottled brown; his lips peel back  
over yellowed incisors and canines.  
Neither all dog nor ancient wolf,  
this whelp the scientists call Dogor,  
*Friend*. Forever two months old,  
ears and nose still rounded,  
ribs and a bit of spine exposed.

They've carbon-dated his bone,  
sampled DNA, but his life remains  
as much a mystery as his body,  
delivered from the underworld.  
Time for a photograph. Black claws  
scrabble on steel as his damp nose  
is lifted by cool, gloved hands.  
He sniffs for wild horses.



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## ABOUT THE WRITER:

Dana Sonnenschein teaches at Southern Connecticut State University. Her publications include books of poetry and prose poems (*Bear Country*, *Natural Forms*, *No Angels but These*, and *Corvus*). Recent work has appeared in *Memory House*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Permafrost*, *Feminist Studies*, *Poppy Road Review*, and Terrain.org's *Dear America* anthology.

**Image:** *Winter Landscape with Wolves* by **Franciszek Wastkowski (1843-1900)**. Oil on canvas. 23.6 x 35.4 inches. 1892. **Public domain.**