

The Meadowlark and the Bear

What meadowlark

Climbing high above her forested ridge
Can recognize the naked parabola – her vital functions
And choices, cooled in the pre-dawn light
Where the sun peaks excited over that perfect horizon,
And that simple arc, the beauty of the lift and power,
The speed of descent, her wings scraping the edge of the grass
Sending dew sifting down onto packed earth
And mice screaming for their holes,
The way her breast skims the meadow's edge like an ocean
So close her feathers kick up dust
And the way her eyes, black and ringed with gold
Can see clearly every scratch in every piece of bark
Which strafes the outside of her nested clearing

What bear

Matted mud covered and huge, heaving
Can recognize the love in her own watery eyes
As she looks upon her cub playing down the creek
Splashing water on himself and breaking sticks
Or the protectiveness of her stance,
The way she folds herself around him when she hears a snap
Recognize from the inside, looking out, then looking in
The self-made tree scratches, or the sounds of her step
The way her haunch folds over itself into three large lumps
Or the brush where she lives –
How the branches have been bent outward from her weight
And how the crushed grass makes a soft bedding
So she can sleep, with long deep breaths
Pressed against the baby fur of her cub,
Or how their breaths in the forest night make a silent harmony

Regard the rolling of the hills, and their busy inhabitants
Squeaking and fighting and sleeping under every bush and log
The forest teems and roils like boiling water
With their heartbeats and sounds
The fractured minds and physicalities don't self-observe
But merely exist, and exist in the cycle
A cycle of deaths to save lives,
Cycles like the spirals on the inside of a conch shell

Or the divided lips of a rose
Where outside is wide and inviting
But to travel along, boats on the dingy sea
Or starved wildmen lost in the woods
Can lead to a squeezing and turning
Like a simple crested wave
Raised up and up, tubed outward
Till it smashed in on itself
And the drops are mixed with the rest of the sea