

Wilderness House Literary Review 12/1

George Moore

Animal Studies

I am the owner of a splendid animal.

– Jose Emilio Pacheco, "Cain's Falconry"

These shadows are selves.

The dog so low to the earth as to be part of it,

the angling peregrine,

numbered among Chicago's towers,

Eider, with their black crowns, white bibs,

majestic as they cut across the bay.

I wonder after the cats of Rhodes,

their procreant drive, the jugs of milk

spilled by the late inhabitants

on open doorways.

Under cover of night, twilight still clinging to the arms

of an Olympic pine, I hear the spotted owl,

late enemy of the logger, they say,

calling singly once, up the trail and then a sudden

disappearance of the moon

turns the northern hemisphere completely black.

I am the rattler that does not move,

the color of Colorado earth, of dried winter wheat,

a rock along the trail that moves,

stretched out across the shadow of the sun

Wilderness House Literary Review 12/1

like a great sea rope unburied after millennium.
But here, in the beating center of this animal,

the fear of death that we carry
like others hunched on our backs,

gripping the tails of our hearts, riding in the cage of this chest,
is for the birds scattered by shock

as early morning gunfire pricks
the solitary day, like a pin

stuck in the map of men,
too near the center of our origins.

Wilderness House Literary Review 12/1

Traveler's Advisory

The space for losing things is gone,
no nooks or crannies where the enemy
has not thought of placing
some future bomb. We dream of limousines
in London neighborhoods, dark windows
and half-moon stares
of children chauffeured to school.
We hear on the desert of the news
of one god, no god, and still one
dies by drone, one comes
ashore in an overloaded boat,
and we are pleased by rumors of defeat
on a map that cannot be slipped
beneath our door. The markets full
of fruits and folks, of Brahmin
and Jersey cows, and everywhere
a silent detonation in the heart
of the crowd. But how did we lose
the space for others in ourselves?