

LITERARY

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The Hunting Lesson

A glass sarcophagus
enshrines
the trophies of a man of action
third floor
Marshall D'Avray Hall
and here they come
plunging through the wall
frozen trackless by shots
too quick for them to hear;
bodies carefully severed
glued to polished boards
the shape of ancient shields of chivalry
no hole of penetration
visible
on gleaming fell.

You calm-eyed huge and smiling moose
gazing sideways at me;
you wear your wisdom on your head
your many points
unable
to avert your sudden death
unable
to preserve you from a fate
up on a wall
where also gaze the deer
whose soft and trusting eyes
melt down on me
one's neck stretched taut
the other pulling back
to take full impact
of its finality.

Were your stiffened tendons
twisted
from the bone
to be replaced by wire
adjusted to a fine precision
simulating pounce, or spring or charge?

A white ram stands on spindle legs
as innocent of death
as of the moment of its birth
but it is obvious
the other knew and fought
its dying
tense and angry -
resentment
glowing from its deadening eye
Lucky the marksman who escaped
those horns
and brought them home for his collection
for friends to marvel at and praise
his skill and bravery,
his courage
when he stalked the cringing cougar
with fat paw pads rip-ready,
and faced the vicious bears:
brown cub
with rounded teddy ears
caught at the moment
he peeked out from the den
while his protector
with ears back snarling
lunged at this thing
coming at her in the crispning autumn air

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Once a minute bud
Opened petals to the sun.
For a while,
Warmth was good,
Eventually, though
Heat grew too strong.
It shrivelled up,
And dropped to Earth
Where trodden upon
It died.
Its death was but a rebirth,
Its legacy a seed
Which blown to new horizons
Found strength to grow again

TODAY! TODAY!

Warm sunshine creeps through
Mighty threatening clouds,
Hope searching a path,
Rays stretch to concrete
Grey, cold land filled with
Robot-like creatures.
Clouds break forth waiting
For one to enter its lighted
Path to heaven.

Pine trees stand tall,
Lifting their hands to the
Mystic sky-craving attention,
Freely a seagull flies leisurely;
going to some unknown destiny.

A haunting whispering message
Drifts unheard: "Unwind your
Robot minds you fools! Listen to
The beating of the sun, let it
Play and dance upon your hair."

A tug of war takes place,
Can it dare be won?
"Today! Today!"
"What about tomorrow?"
"Today! Today!"
"Don't bother me now. I am in a hurry!"
"Today! Today!"
Clouds close their open gates.
Sinking sun sadly smiles good-bye,
"Today? Today?" Sorry, today is done."

by Deborah Ruth Wilton