

The Night's My Choice

Tonight the night's my choice and not the house
that keeps me in a feeble pulse of love.
Out to walk the road, my body moves
instinctively, original and aroused.
Sensing the smells of summer, I'm aware
of earth and sleeping flowers and leaves and ferns.
There's dampness too and warmth. The sky's the moon's,
or else the moon's the sky's. They do not care.
The air is taken by the whippoorwills.
The valley's in a fog. A fattened cloud sits there
and makes the close trees on this hillside clear,
and darkens deeper all the farther hills.
The fireflies are daring in that dark, and I
am lightened as elusive light uncovers
me. No need to look for pleasures or for lovers
or teach a heart that dances how to die.

-- Zelda Friedman

Mansfield Center, Conn.

Le Douanier

A middle-aged child's imaginings
have dreamt this impossible jungle
fleshed out with incredible grasses,
plants, and trees.

Improbably birds listen
and snakes undulate to the piping
of the naked dark woman
with the luminous eyes.

A dark river flows
at the feet of this equatorial
Aphrodite. A dark moon bathes
her pre-Adamic paradise.

-- Barriss Mills

West Lafayette, Indiana