

the bard of amphibia

i arrive home to find,
in the middle of the table where i write,
a large aquarium occupied by
two enormous salamanders.
one of these black-and-tans is doing
its best to die under a rock; the
other is braced against the side panel
of glass and trying to talk me into
liberating him. obviously salamanders
are, in terms of socio-cultural evolution,
naive. this one doesn't realize that were
i to free him from his glass cage my wife
would liberate my balls from the rest of
my body. tough luck, mandrake.

still, there is always irony:
i go to the t.v. room and say, "god, i'm
happy to find 'salamander world' established
in the dining room. when do we start selling
tickets? we'll need to get the permits
for a monorail from the queen mary to our front
lawn. shall we award the food concession to
wendy's or mc donald's, the drinks to coke
or pepsi? by the way, how are the pet rats
doing? the tortoise? the inside toad and
the outside toad? the clever cats? the
guppies? the spiders that infest the
garage? the birds that the cats rush home
to decapitate? the gopher colony that is
undermining the foundations of our humble
mountain cabin?

"most of all, though, i want to thank
you for once again keeping my writing career
in the forefront of your considerations.
i've been experiencing a bit of writer's
block ever since the mass asphyxiation
of the ant farm. yes, indeed, i can hardly
gaze into the largely barren habitat of the
salamanders without realizing they will surely
prove a fertile inspiration to me."

gerald locklin