

A Blind Fisherman

By Stanley Moss

I teach my friend, a fisherman gone blind, to cast
true left, right or center and how far
between lily pads and the fallen cedar.
Darkness is precious, how long will darkness last?
Our bait, worms, have no professors, they live
in darkness, can be taught fear of light.
Cut into threes even sixes they live
separate lives, recoil from light.
He tells me, "I am seldom blind
when I dream, morning is anthracite,
I play blind man's bluff,
I cannot find myself,
my shoe, the sink,
tell time, but that's spilled milk and ink,
the lost and found I cannot find.
I can tell the difference between a mollusk and a whelk,
a grieving liar and a lemon rind."
Laughing, he says, "I still hope the worm will turn,
pink, lank, and warm, dined
out on apples of good fortune.
Books have a faintly legible smell.
Divorced from the sun, I am a kind
of bachelor henpecked by the night.
Sometimes I use my darkness well—
in the overcast and sunlight of my mind.
I can still wink, sing, my eyes are songs."
Darkness is precious, how long will darkness last?
He could not fish, he could not walk, he fell
in his own feces. He wept. He died where he fell.
The power of beauty to right all wrongs
is hard for me to sell.

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