

# Tarantulas on the Lifebuoy

By Thomas Lux

For some semitropical reason  
when the rains fall  
relentlessly they fall

into swimming pools, these otherwise  
bright and scary  
arachnids. They can swim  
a little, but not for long

and they can't climb the ladder out.  
They usually drown—but  
if you want their favor,  
if you believe there is justice,  
a reward for not loving

the death of ugly  
and even dangerous (the eel, hog snake,  
rats) creatures, if

you believe these things, then  
you would leave a lifebuoy  
or two in your swimming pool at night.

And in the morning  
you would haul ashore  
the huddled, hairy survivors

and escort them  
back to the bush, and know,  
be assured that at least these saved,  
as individuals, would not turn up

again someday  
in your hat, drawer,  
or the tangled underworld

of your socks, and that even—  
when your belief in justice  
merges with your belief in dreams—  
they may tell the others

in a sign language  
four times as subtle  
and complicated as man's

that you are good,  
that you love them,  
that you would save them again.

Thomas Lux, "Tarantulas on the Lifebuoy" from *New and Selected Poems: 1975-1995*.

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