

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.

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Born in Northampton, Massachusetts, Thomas Lux's poetry often deals with life's tragedies, but usually employs an ironic humor. He published numerous books of poetry including *Split Horizon*, which won the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award. Lux taught at Sarah Lawrence College.

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