

Very Large Moth

By Craig Arnold

After D.H.L.

Your first thought when the light snaps on and the black wings
clatter about the kitchen is a bat

the clear part of your mind considers rabies the other part
does not consider knows only to startle

and cower away from the slap of its wings though it is soon
clearly not a bat but a moth and harmless

still you are shy of it it clings to the hood of the stove
not black but brown its orange eyes sparkle

like televisions its leg joints are large enough to count
how could you kill it where would you hide the body

a creature so solid must have room for a soul
and if this is so why not in a creature

half its size or half its size again and so on
down to the ants clearly it must be saved

caught in a shopping bag and rushed to the front door
afraid to crush it feeling the plastic rattle

loosened into the night air it batters the porch light
throwing fitful shadows around the landing

That was a really big moth is all you can say to the doorman
who has watched your whole performance with a smile

the half-compassion and half-horror we feel for the creatures
we want not to hurt and prefer not to touch

Source: *Poetry* (October 2013)