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Simply Caring

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Abstract

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Being There

The neighbors thought their children
should witness birth,
but Missy picked our house
for birthing,
nursing,
weaning,

aging.

Abundant years
and I somehow felt Missy
as forever,
until I found myself
whispering into wispy fur,
watching mottled eyes mist
and glaze to gone.

I wonder,
why such ballyhoo
over birth
and yet so little interest
in the commitment of caring
that lasts across a lifetime,
complete with being there
to speak softly
as spirits grapple
with their going?

Sharing Space

I watched you scoot a scurrying spider
onto a scrap of paper,
into your protective palm,
then across the hallway
to rehome her
under the protective cover
of our colorful kitchen curtains.

You sheltered that bundle of being
as we might once have tended
tender Bramble Cay melomys,
grazing quaggas,
trusting dodos,
gentle thylacines,
sleek Baiji dolphins,
gregarious passenger pigeons,
solitary black rhinos,
prehistoric Yangtze sturgeons,
eloquent dusky sparrows—
whom we now find to be

missing.

Swaggering Salamander

Dressed in colors of caution,
 a tiger salamander
 surged over the rough roadway
 with such certainty—
 tacky toes pushing pavement
 with tail-powered torque,
 wrinkling with each wiggly weave.

I hastened to hoist that fine amphibian,
 holding her between tentative tips
 while her rubbery limbs
 perpetually paddled.
 She looked back at me
 with shiny brown spheres
 that bulged like May buds—
 lenses located for wary-watch
 when submerged
 (with legs lax and
 long tail trailing).

I took her to the perimeter
 of a picturesque pond
 and tucked that tiny traveler
 under a fallen leaf
 for careful keeping,
 all the while pondering
 what her peepers might perceive
 and why our paths had crossed.

In time—
 given how busy she was with being,
 and the wrongness of roads
 (*and of so much more*)—
 I came to see that I was there
 only for her.