

## The Quick Brown Fox

On mythic prairies,  
the agile cheetah  
and his  
childish treats—

a mob, a fit,  
a burst of speed,  
as when  
businessmen

adopt  
serengeti strategies,  
covering  
customary conceits

with evolutionary  
psychology:  
*I can't help it,*  
*I was born this way.*

A mahogany desk  
or executive toy  
make solid defenses  
for plutocrats

and other hunters—  
grim alpha males  
susceptible  
to sympathetic magic,

taking for their own  
the senses  
lately employed  
by their wall-mounted

trophies.  
Repeat after me.  
*I'm at least*  
*as swift*

*as what I've killed.*  
When fear's  
algorithms  
distend

the market—  
elderly ex-soldiers  
cashing in  
their hazard pay—

these fell beasts  
will swoop  
and swerve  
with claws

extended, to hedge  
and feast  
on decimated  
remains,

socking away  
treasure  
with swift networks,  
in caverns

overseas.  
A devil's reach  
should e'er exceed  
his grasp

and pinstripe  
suits and tony  
tweed (like  
big cats'

spots or racing  
stripes)  
advertise  
the salient fact

with a huckster's  
bonhomie:  
Even God  
loves greed.

## Gold Rush

The snakeskin  
gleam of highways  
raked over  
sierras

humped  
like burning  
coals—  
there's the glitter

in our treasury.  
The car  
is always  
running,

replaying  
our collapse  
as retailer  
statements,

detouring  
with a tourist's  
eye  
for schlock

among the ruins.  
*Fillerup.*  
We can't  
buy

our way out,  
not with ouncefuls  
of double-eagled  
coins

or spurting wells,  
not with hands  
dragooned  
to caressing

chrome  
with chamois—  
there's a good girl,  
well-preserved

though drinking  
oil daily, both  
the escape route  
and the chain.

We knew the terms  
when we signed  
but the crash  
stays ugly.

Crossing over  
the dotted line,  
the arroyo's lip  
tears open

a splashing leak  
we won't survive.  
The fuel  
goes up in flame.

## A Primrose Path

Using martial arts  
to defend  
the small rockfish  
of the reef

from the large  
rockfish  
of the reef:  
What a waste of effort.

Sleek modernism  
and business  
coexist  
but not

the yellow-finned  
teardrops  
in various sizes,  
neither any

lion and its prey—  
they shall  
not lie  
down

together  
to games  
of Connect 4  
and Old Maid,

bored siblings  
on God's  
interminable  
car trip. Forget

heroics,  
sad mechanism  
by which  
to console

oneself  
for existential  
pains. When  
you place

a fallen egg  
back in the nest,  
who's to say  
your touch

doesn't damn it  
more surely  
than the fall?  
If you want

to love yourself,  
identify  
with the aggressor.  
Be fierce

and full now.  
The one whose  
growling belly  
is the law.