

*Swift Acquisition/Seam/Keeper's Fee*

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These poems explore humanity's complex relationship with the natural world, using the language of exploitation, destruction and (potential) reconciliation. The poems highlight the impact of words by drawing connections between our behavior as a species and the way we describe our intentions. My goal is to simultaneously highlight environmental degradation while offering new ways of talking about our place in the global ecology. The structure of the poems uses deliberately rigid formal schemata juxtaposed against fluid phrasing and line breaks to further draw out these distinctions.

*Swift Acquisition*

A simple proposition (set to scenes  
Of rough humanoids gathered at lake's edge  
Before the settled, the certain.) It means  
More when you calculate than when you hedge  
Innocuous harvest fueled by looped genes

Measured in millennia. There they are  
Beside the water at sun's death, narrow-  
Eyed and top-heavy, hands ready: sand bar  
Dug for clamshells, clay shelf leveled, sparrow  
Wings braided with ligament and reed. Far

From harmonic, even those early days  
Culled too many from passing herd, black stone  
Chipped into arrows. Move through, move on, ways  
Laid down with swift acquisition. Crack bone  
Into marrow, scrape last hides for warmth, blaze  
Routes of other mammals from tracks alone

To memory. No one paid the keeper's  
Fee. No one paused to mourn the clean river's  
Run, the dodo's bright yellow eye. Cheaper  
Still, twist intent to thrive. Hunt delivers  
Food, shelter, commerce, power, growth—features

Best aligned with raw cosmic expansion  
Than one blue marble's fragile barrier  
Against the rot. Considered chance? Branch in  
From guileless root. Become the carrier  
Pigeon's first sleek hope. Re-write deft scansion

From flushed water's fringe, internecine howl  
Drowned by new music. Listen for accord  
Drenched in our surrendered deception, cowl  
Peeled back. Give and give (its own sweet reward):  
Empathy replaces predator's prowl

Carried by history, crafted word by delicate word.

*Seam*

As if the bottomless pit, well-  
Named, spun its damp black silt across  
An earth too arrogant for hell  
Over high tide, as if the loss  
Of tree or sparrow carried sell-

By date marooned by tomorrow  
Or cast away into the same  
Dim light. Fresh, slick blot too thorough  
To dismiss burned our bones with shame  
Deeper than the dig, now hollow

And frail. Coal's dark smudge or white ash  
Rain scrapes against the touch of sky.  
We collate, we collude with brash  
Intent. We counter each reply  
With cool heads. Open palms. Red cash.

*Keeper's Fee*

Take the world, its storms and sunrises  
Brushed with dust from Alpha Centauri  
Or flecked, gray asteroids. Surprise is  
This: now and when tells the same story  
Snaked and rooted in enterprises  
Wrung from the ground. Ripe hope and glory  
Spin like fat, lazy fruit. Each buys his  
Notion of progress, allegory  
Fecund or fetid. Compromise is

Tied with fantasy unpaid in full  
View of throttled river or valley  
Raked to field. Sift through mounds to re-drill  
Purpose from scar or stone. The tally  
Scored from rabid evolution: kill  
Switch front and focused. Next blind alley  
Narrows and chafes. Squint at light distilled  
From wave through prism's crack. We rally  
Reason, hoard the keeper's fee until

Loose change rattles like bone.