

Today, An Old Lady

moved

distantly in the pasture,
slowly, quaintly, antiquesly,
across the winding greenness of the creek bottom,
appearing and disappearing among the dotting hawthorns,
orange-crimson for the coming autumn,
green-speckled yellow from the leaf miners.

My eyes, from the apple-smelling crest of the sledding hill,
caught the sweep of slopes rolling in enough directions
for the savoring of a hunter of two million years, stroked
their way solidly across the harmony of those joining valleys
with an arrogance of familiarity in their stare,
telescoping that little old lady until the
dark kerchief and poke of grayed hair,
stoop of shoulders under soft-hanging sweater,
old vein-muscled sturdiness of white calves,
and pan beneath her elbow with its
barely visible mound of puffballs,
were part of my hunter's knowing gaze.

I savored the measure of those two million years
of history and turned away, straight-backed,
nostrils dilating to the tang of hickory leaves.

I permitted her to continue this thing
no person should live in circumstances
forbidding.