

## Extremes

The elders of our family Arctiidae,  
born a day or two before me,  
warned we Garden Tiger Moths  
*Take care with a light* - or was it? -  
*Take care with alight.*  
But I alone ignored.

Diving dipping dashing  
swooping on the lights  
of moon, stars, those of men.  
And for me the fun  
of staring out the sun.

Filtering any fear, fluttering towards filaments  
I flush my feathery antennae  
fanned out like a peacock's plumage.  
From wings of repose -  
mere mottled brown and white  
to dazzling black and orange  
surging into flight.

Ziping zagging thudding thumping thorax  
gnashing nettles, devouring dock  
taunting tortoiseshells, roaring at red admirals.  
Befriending and befuddling our predatory bats.  
Leading the charge of my absent eclipse and roaring  
*My family Arctiidae - Arctiidae till I die!*

It drops  
It stops.  
I cower in the closet  
close to the clothes moths.  
It's dark - but still too bright for me.  
Wishing to be their beige  
envying their food sacs  
their lack of need to forage.

I skulk - embarrassed by my antics  
my showy acts, my preening.  
In despair now  
of what they all must think.

I too will forage no longer  
but will wilt and die in guilt.  
This moth, no longer solar,  
Undiagnosed bipolar.

## Albino Peacocks

At night I dread to dream  
for fear of fleeing from hyenas or prison rapes.  
But tonight my dreams instead  
are of albino peacocks  
nesting and nestling  
in the boot of my car.  
Hiding, I surmise  
from their colorful cousins.  
Abashed and afraid like me  
where self-esteem is a memory  
from whom I've cut all ties.

But then to my surprise  
Google tells me it's all lies.  
Albino is but a guise  
for they mostly are leucistic  
a new word, a new statistic.  
They still have pigment in their cells  
and a stunning plumage  
that spreads and swells.

In dreams I give these birds release  
thanking them for some soft peace.  
I, like them, seeking hope outside  
retaining color  
regaining pride.

## Last Legs

I grieve and grimace  
at knotted calves  
and vulgar veins  
that were once  
my pierced and punctured playthings.

Those days of dashing  
to nearby needle banks  
delving not depositing  
to rummage in the remnants  
of others' residue.

Until an old friend came  
never to leave.  
Not my brother in blood  
but a brother when broken.

Gifting me his time  
his presence and his words.  
Funneling my flashes  
of temper and torment  
into serenity and sanity

Looking at my legs again  
this time through a different lens  
they work, they move.  
Like me they're here  
supported by a kind countenance  
counselling one step at a time.

Until a day comes  
when my legs and willpower weaken  
for just one more hit  
to get me through life's shit.  
His disapproving glare  
is now a curious stare.  
This time his choice to follow  
our veins subside and swallow.  
My turn now  
to hold his falling head  
this soothing madness  
is where our legs have led.

## Digger Down

A digger driver dug today  
without palaver  
launching levers  
lifting loads  
today a field  
tomorrow roads.

A digger driver warm today  
a sweaty lather  
on face and head;  
but still he worked  
his generation  
never shirked.

A digger driver died today  
a cab cadaver.  
Heart gave way  
or so they said.  
His simple lunch  
of cheese and bread  
strewn on his lap  
his hands and head.

An orphaned digger cried today  
mourning its faithful father.  
It burrowed deep  
as if for oil.  
The bucket churned  
the virgin soil  
as if a grave  
for a man of toil.

## Contentment

In our teens we joked of marriage  
sometimes even to each other  
for company – if unattached –  
to share our twilight years  
when free from any encumbrance  
of family, mortgages, careers  
and awkward, shuffling sex.

Decades passed  
Christmas greetings fizzled out  
but we then searched  
though trials of technology  
social media's wrong turns and false hopes  
until we met  
and lied that we hadn't changed a bit

And now?  
That twilight shines too bright,  
But we unite  
in shunning any notion of  
death's proud purposes  
with regular doses of Vitamin D,  
garden centre visits  
afternoon teas and shipping forecasts.  
Sprinkling any silences  
with sterile conversations  
while our lips brush  
But never touch.