

## P-22 (A Mountain Lion in Los Angeles)

Give me a name.  
You have a name, man,  
people don't play games.

You have a name,  
you might thrive,  
a name could keep you alive.

Give me a name  
before I die.  
Sure, I understand

P is for *puma*,  
but the other?  
Nobody remembers a number.

When you're a number,  
you're the other.  
No name means no fame,

no park like Griffith,  
no boulevard like Wilshire,  
no highway like Mulholland.

Even the elephant  
at the zoo has a name: *Billy*.  
I was in his pen the other night,

sorry, his habitat, yeah right.  
I stepped over the lowest wire  
into the middle of his enclosure.

I was going to go for his neck  
but being full of koala bear,  
I couldn't quite get up there.

(P-22 cont'd, pg. 2. New stanza)

He pointed a tusk at me, tsk, tsk.  
The next morning I was infamous  
for the Koala Murder, but the zoo

people decided not to euthanize  
me, thank you, for the mercy.  
It would've been no mercy killing

for them to kill me, a pure predator,  
so they let me wander into the ether,  
mountain air where I'm most at home,

strolling up Hockney's Drive to work,  
doing a lap or two of the great park,  
diving into a Silver Lake backyard,

floating in dark crawlspace under a house,  
or pulling off a more reckless hunt,  
a long, slow haunt of the boulevard.

## Griffith Park

Me living here  
is like you  
staying on your  
easy chair,  
or straying  
out on the living  
room rug.

Shrug.

Imagine  
never leaving  
your living  
room.

Blink.

I never dreamed  
of such  
a lack  
of space.  
I never dreamed  
of such  
loss.

Sniff.

I got into it  
with father.  
He sent me  
on my way  
when one  
blunt incisor  
impressed.

He juggled  
with my jugular  
vein.

Yawn.

(Griffith Park cont'd, Pg 2. New stanza)

Jangled it  
like a guitar  
string

Frown.

And yet it is high,  
steep, with deep  
canyons, cold creeks.  
Mt. Hollywood at dawn.

The giant white-lettered sign.

Curl.

under Mt. Lee.  
Mother saw me  
off, hurled  
me out of Malibu

To the tail of the Santa Monicas.

I made my way  
along the carotid  
artery  
of the city.

Curled asleep.

I found its heart.  
I'll be there,  
busy like a street  
performer,  
and you'll crowd around.

## **Eight Alpacas**

I was mad.  
Had just shrieked at mother  
as she licked

my face one last time,  
licked by father,  
our first fist fight.

This his territory,  
I flew through Malibu.  
Then I see

an oasis  
built by human fools,  
a play pen full of alpaca.

I killed it.  
Every last one of them.  
Full tilt.

Won hand by hand  
with perfect paws,  
long lovely claws.

They ran circles,  
panicked,  
when I came in.

Pancaked,  
when I was done.  
laid flat.

Blood on,  
in blessed earth.  
Like you would

Rip Christmas  
presents, to useless  
piles of stuff.

(Eight Alpacas cont'd, pg. 2. New stanza)

The posse came.  
I went east.  
To mountains end.

To get there, I  
had to jump  
the cliff-cross

the 405 and 101.  
At the passes,  
they overlooked,

as I went under.

## The LA Freeways

I was running out  
of darkness, time,  
trying to get east

over mountains  
that stand at sunrise  
and fall to sunset.

I'd been taught not  
to wade in, to  
stop at narrow creeks

of white light, a fill  
of loud pods that speed  
like drops of water.

That turned to red  
light if you weren't  
dead, wider streams

ever treacherous, near  
impossible to cross.  
It took some study

at the passes, Sepulveda,  
Cahuenga, where wars  
were won, and lost.

Treaties signed.  
I put a cautious paw  
in, no light coming,

going, and got across  
without a splash,  
but every crossing

was uncertain, a border  
of disorder, light  
concentrating like the fear

(LA Freeways cont'd, pg. 2. New stanza)

tight on the inside.  
I saw two of the big,  
leveed rivers

but tunneled under.  
I could hear  
their maneuvers

hovering, in over.  
Speed is effective  
but stealth more so.

I was vulnerable  
in light, and the city  
was polluted with it.

So I tucked myself  
in, into its clear, precise  
pockets of night.

## **Infamous, notorious**

City birds all on twitter, tweet  
about me in early morning trees.  
Coyotes say they've seen my face  
before, raccoons and opossums  
declaim and defame, mice tremor  
while they flatter, then skitter.  
I oversee, don't understand what

farewells they mean, but I listen  
to their strange, infernal sounds.  
I go down to the wide river, slip  
on the slick, steep concrete slope.  
New papers scattered everywhere,  
like birds in air, inanimate, articulate.  
I see my face like I do in the river,  
    out of invisibility, serene, not mean.