

Bird Beast Flower Rock

Men in this tribe speak
of mountain lions across the fire
as women known
in part eyes open
through the flames
in partnership in parting
of all those who go
their own way blanketed
antler horn or snout
to hoof or claw or nail
around the fire under the skin

of birds as mind-stuff
igniting the air—
dreams, imagination
attitude, emotion
intuition the pre-cognitive—
their shapes against the sky
raising hackles
the scales of their cries
calling up the lizard past
coiled at the base of the skull
feathering our nervous systems
the animal soul to this day

of bees and moths as kindred
spirits eyes compound
antennas sensitive
a sprinkling under the light
o swete liqueur
o sweetened thighs
golden with pollen
silver with stardust

of mead and maeve and maiden
of wish I may wish I might
o honey tongued
under the sun
under the moon
metamorphosis
a metaphor a lisp
myth a mystery
their wings their wings

drawn to the light

of plants as powers
petals become whispers
message-bearing angels
becoming seed becoming root
stem meristem meretrix
up to them again
reaching into the sky
bringing down the sun
loves me loves me not
nourishing poisoning
butter under the chin
calm cold green reason
the sage in bloom
distilled infused extracted
a pocket full of everything nice
elixir as need be

of rock and stone
as rocking chair as headpiece
of mineral and crystal
the likes of what lives on them
preys on them
algal and fungal symbiosis
microbial action
Mercurius curious as the Merlin
biting the bark gnawing the granite
stonecrop rockbrake
as wind and rain and ice
in cracks and crevices
weathering the mountains
and no green there
under that arcanum
still this side of Osiris
but toadstool white cavefish white
egg and eye white
bloodless sunless filamental
a single organism
underlying whole continents
a few inches deep
sine qua non

for Dale Pendell