

## The Bear

The bear is not half the father  
The stickleback or maned wolf is,  
Not such a husband as the gander  
Dolphin eagle or deep-voiced whale.  
He does not nest like the beaver  
Nor serve his mate like the coyote  
Nor share her like the alpha gorilla.  
His offspring he regards with anger,  
More than the touch of the cannibal  
Like tomcat, largemouth bass  
Bull alligator and hog.  
Dam and siblings he remembers  
If at all as an old sow  
With twins of unfamiliar smells.  
Unlike the stag he does not gather  
a crowd. Like the hermit thrush  
He's wary of many eyes. With heron  
And cypress he stands tall in the water.  
Yet the bear is none of his avatars  
Ancestors or bedtime stories.  
His stink and fat have their own reason.  
His heat and honey have their season.  
His day is numbered with the condor.  
He sleeps alone throughout the winter.