

The Animals

Helena Deland

We went up the mountain
Last Friday night
All of the animals
Were out in plain sight
They didn't bid us to follow them
They didn't hiss us away
No, to us, my love
They had nothing to say

And while you saw the tremor
And you saw the wings
You saw the glistening white teeth
I was busy with things in my mind
Things that I tend to
As though to survive

I'm not proud I was asking you
"Do you dim yourself down?"
Do you say terrible things about me
When I'm not around?"
You sweep a hand through the clearing
Say "Can't you see?
There ain't anything threatening you here
Least of all me"

Put your life on the easel
There, right next to mine
We ain't living like weasels
We don't have the time, never will
All of the creatures made for the dark woods
Whooping, that's what I heard
What if the easel fell over
And the paintings were burned to a crisp?

Night like these I can't quite tell
A fear from a wish