

MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2006

Audubon: A Vision

Here's the first section to one of my favorite poems.

Audubon: A Vision

I

Was Not the Lost Dauphin

[A]

Was not the last dauphin, though handsome was only

Base-born and not even able

To make a decent living, was only

Himself, Jean Jacques, and his passion--what

Is man but his passion?

Saw,

Eastward and over the cypress swamp, the dawn,

Redder than meat, break;

And the large bird,

Long neck outthrust, wings crooked to scull air, moved

In a slow calligraphy, crank, flat and black against  
The color of God's blood spilt, as though  
Pulled by a string.

Saw

It proceed across the inflamed distance.

Moccasins set in hoar frost, eyes fixed on the bird,  
Thought: "On that sky it is black."  
Thought: "In my mind it is white."  
Thinking: "Ardea occidentalis, heron, the great one."

Dawn: his heart shook in the tension of the world.

Dawn: and what is your passion?

[B]

October: and the bear,  
Daft in the honey-light, yawns.

The bear's tongue, pink as a baby's, out-crisps to the curled tip,  
It bleeds the black blood of blueberry.

The teeth are more importantly white

Than has ever been imagined.

The bear feels his own fat

Sweeten, like a drowse, deep to the bone.

Bemused, above the fume of ruined blueberries,

The last bee hums.

The wings, like mica, glint

In the sunlight.

He leans on his gun. Thinks

How thin is the membrane between himself and the world.

--Robert Penn Warren