

CATWALK

My voice and substance suspended
 Against the wall in the tabby's gaze:
 Secret lenses of Alice's looking glass eye-level, unguarded
 For an instant— Always I knew if I moved with dark quick as light
 I could descend one of those twin tunnels when they opened
 To receive the lamp going out. The passage vibrated,
 Still warm with the last wild leap from the fruit cellar to my book shelf.
 Tiny sparks flared, died deeper in mazes of mist and whisper
 Of small things hiding in selected crevices. My trackless step
 Swirled soft smells of fennel, toadflax and humus.
 Ahead the main shafts converged, a vaulted corridor of tree veins,
 Leaf-shine, sun-stain. Joy was magneto rhythm, intense probing prongs;
 A trophy room glowed with grasshoppers, shrews, bright wings
 Spread content in perennial preservation. Convolutions
 Of shapes and sounds changed and flowed on a warp of night,
 Approaching, receding, times nine, a vector of velvet slanted south.
 Green was a flavor and all other eyes a strong scent. Motion
 Was a prolonged spring, a dive that never reached water, reversed upward
 At will. There were spare moons and extra summers, adventures
 Still wrapped in fur and yards of strange cord.
 Deeper was slow cryptic drumming, growing,
 A great patterned flash of gilt and ebony, a weaving of vines
 And scorched grass resisting shadow. Then
 A sly stir in a chamber beyond, another door, a brink,
 A river noise, a rush of olive. At my feet a beetle—
 No, a scarab jewel! And I left without crossing the Nile.