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## The Valley Where We Live

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## *The Valley Where We Live*

A doe stands in the garden, nibbling lettuce  
we don't care to pick. OK, we say to the sun.  
Between the deer's legs rabbits walk their awkward way.  
The valley where we live is steep but not cloistered.  
Anything mild may enter: rain showers,  
balloons, snails, dictionaries, timothy, milk.  
Any born violence soon rises of its own energy  
and spins off the rim of our horizon.  
We make up gentle nicknames to their memory:  
dust devil, hooligan, zigzag, roughhouse.  
Potatoes turn earth itself sweet, we say,  
burying our mild dead where we must.  
We like poplar trees, how they take the quaking wind  
and calm it with slender semaphore.  
Sometimes, though, wandering the upper paths,  
we hear from beyond our valley muffled shouts,  
insistent chant of engines run uphill.  
Then the poplars shudder without wind.  
Then we pace our sheep-cropped lawns meaning to do  
whatever we have forgotten. Like children  
standing the first time at a cliff's windy edge  
we wonder what it is keeps us from leaping.