The Nitrogen Cycle

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Before the break-up of my country
I was content to lie under the kitchen sink
and gnaw on busted pipes.
There was a nest of mice
with whom I could exchange recipes.
When the military planes flew
too low over my house
I would stagger out into the yard
and sprinkle Tabasco sauce
on their dreamy vapor trails.
My head was full of larks
lost in a sing-along.

A Snake person walked out of the forest
and just stared at me.
"O Snake man," I said,
"have you seen my little brother?"

"My name," he finally replied,
"is Mr. Ashby. Please address me
by that name or I will embarrass you
by telling you a beautiful story."

"You'll always be Snake man to me,
inclined though you may be
to tell beautiful stories
behind the guise of a pseudonym,
because that's your nature.
You are a wily apparition, no doubt, conjured by my own crumbling defenses."

Mr. Ashby cleared his throat and smiled: "Baby's tears began to flow from baby's blue eyes. The baby's slippers were starting to walk on their own. It was a false baby with false baby's breath...."

"That would be my brother," I sighed. "O thank you, thank you, thank you."