

Black Slugs

Black slugs move like stalking leopards
across wide savannahs of grass
toward Meccas of ripening tomatoes
Edens of early zucchinis.

We gather them at dusk,
take them by the paint-tin-load
beyond the bottom of the paddock
or to the blackberry bushes over the road

but they come back, so
stealthy and tenacious in their gradualness
eating for their growing families
eating for the next generations

another of the hordes of the overburdened earth
and you don't know what to do
and I don't know what to do
and still we've not discovered in ourselves

the inner chambers of our deadliness
and locked them, and so the battle goes
and no one wins it, no one knows, these
beings, these ancient beings, in all

their strange, defiant beauty, stretching
forward, regathering, stretching out again
the light on their extended backs shining
like silver, glinting like midnight stars.

David Brooks