

Tjawangwa Dema

Black Bear in the Grocery Store

here we are in Thousand Oaks –
cypress trees in the grue distance –
milk in one hand and the other out-
stretched
fetching
when we are stupefied in the land of plenty
of aisles and aisles of having
what is canned bottled preserved fresh
all must be paid for
in this tiled valley of dead things
between steel streams full with multi-coloured plastic
and paper packages and tin flowers
and below the m&ms and loo roll and ramen
a black bear – barely a yearling – so hot
she cannot calibrate sleep
maw open
she places paw
before paw
her bow-legged limbs all limber and lank
her cinnamon snout bearing low
in search of –
I make a list –
bird food and garbage
water and same-day salmon
here
in this counterfeit den
with its cool cool weather
she moves
that we might see her and do more
than spill our cold milk

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