

NIGHT VISITOR

Encapsuled in the staked and zippered tent,
prepared to spend the night, we lay content.
Staccato rains and whipping winds beat down
as though to loose our grip from solid ground.
Despite the storm that flashed from booming skies,
cocooned and shielded, we soon closed our eyes.

We fell asleep with thunder as the chime
that marked the turbulence of passing time.
We drifted sleepily through wind and rain
absorbing rhythms of the storm's refrain
as dog and I dozed off amid the fuss
of raging elements surrounding us.

Awake! Awake! Our senses zeroed in,
my face near contact with the tent's thin skin,
a mirror to a face as close outside
that posed in silence listening, cold-eyed.
The dog and I lay still, fully aware
the creature just outside was waiting there.

I could not hear; the storm noise filled my ears.
I could not see; the blackness fueled my fears.
But still I knew the soundless presence there
was taking samples from the swirling air
and measuring the size of the alarm,
deciding if we meant it any harm.

It did not make a movement, nor did we.
I strained to learn the beast's identity
before its mystic presence be withdrawn,
but then, as quiet as it came, was gone.
Without a breath of sound it disappeared
and with it took the silent threats we feared.

The storm that buffeted throughout the night
transformed itself to calm by early light.

The scent that lingered in the morning air
was musky proof the creature had been there.
What visited in darkness, we're not sure,
but we both know the odor of wet fur.

by Lee Netzler