Lullaby For The Elderly
David Young
LULLABY FOR THE ELDERLY

Under the hum and whir of night, under the covers, deep in the bed, beyond all the calling of doves, past the great flares of love and pain, the daily bread and grind, it's warm as a pot, soft as a breast. It's the deep woods, the place where you come to a clearing, find the still pool, and slip gently into it—to bathe, to dive, to drown.

Your mother is there, under the leaves, smelling of milk, and your father is hiding among the trees. A giant hand tousles your hair, and the mouse is there with its dangerous eyes, the bear with his shimmering fur, the rivers that thunder off ledges and spill into gorges as mist.

When you wake, refreshed, murmur a blessing for those who have never returned. Say a word to the corn and the wheat, to the deer and squirrels and whistling toads, who brought you right up to the edge of the woods and let you go in on your own.