

Wilderness

Have we forgotten
that wilderness is not a place,
but a pattern of soul
where every tree, every bird and beast
is a soul maker?

Have we forgotten
that wilderness is not a place
but a moving feast of stars,
footprints, scales and beginnings?

Since when
did we become afraid of the night
and that only the bright stars count?
or that our moon is not a moon
unless it is full?

By whose command were the animals
through groping fingers,
one for each hand,
reduced to the big and little five?

Have we forgotten
that every creature is within us
carried by tides of earthly blood
and that we named them.

Have we forgotten
that wilderness is not a place
but a season and we are in its
final hour?

Ian McCallum