

## Jim Harrison

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### *To a Meadowlark*

For M.L. Smoker

Up on the Ft. Peck Reservation  
(Assiniboine and Sioux)  
just as I passed two white crosses  
in the ditch I hit a fledgling meadowlark,  
the slightest thunk against the car's grille.  
A mean minded God  
in a mean minded machine, offering  
another ghost to the void to join the two  
white crosses stabbing upward in the insufferable  
air. Wherever we go we do harm, forgiving  
ourselves as wheels do cement for wearing  
each other out. We set this house  
on fire forgetting that we live within.

Driving south of Wolf Point down by Missouri  
M.L. Smoker is camped with her Indians,  
tipis in a circle, eating buffalo meat for breakfast,  
reminding themselves what life may have been.  
She says that in the evenings the wild horses  
from the terra incognita to the south come  
to the river to drink and just stand there  
watching the Indians dance. I leave quickly,  
still feeling like a bullsnake whipping through  
the grass looking for something to kill.

## *Reading Calasso*

I'm the pet dog of a family of gods  
who never gave me any training.  
Usually they are remote.  
I curl up in an empty house  
and they peek in the window when I'm sleeping.  
Their children feed me table scraps  
with ink stained fingers.  
Sometimes they lock me in a shed and keep calling my name out-  
side the door.  
They expect me to bark day and night  
because nearly everyone is their enemy