

Finally the doorbell rang and mother answered it. I tried to assume an air of nonchalance, but I got mixed up when I introduced Tom to my parents and Eileen giggled and laughed at me.

The three of us left my house and Tom and I didn't exchange words for quite a while.

When we finally arrived at the park, we couldn't lose Eileen. The three of us did everything together that night. It was perfectly terrible.

It came time to leave with Eileen on one side of Tom and me on the other.

As we approached the door, I told Tom that I had had a nice time and ran into the house. From the window I could see Eileen and Tom walking on up the street until they turned the corner.

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## EARTH

Robert Petty

### I

Out of the tongueless mouth of space,  
 Deep from the voiceless throat of time,  
 There where the naked ethers climb:  
 Spiritless to swiftening pace,  
 Passionless to dread embrace,  
 Game creation's pantomime—  
 Flaming breath, yet void of rhyme,  
 Cooled before a watching face.

Cooled to basalt ocean basins,  
 Cooled to granite's twisted land,  
 Came the darkened rain for days, in  
 Torrents, till the rivers ran;  
 Then from out the misted heavens,  
 A shadow past—life began.

### II

Out of the vapors came a being,  
 An element to earth unknown,  
 Moved in waters, covered stone,  
 Crept from darkness without seeing,  
 Toward the sunlight, growing, seeding,  
 Until the granite hills were sown,  
 With innate gropings not their own,  
 Living, dying and succeeding.

Until the trembling waters stirred,  
Potential of some distant might,  
As evolving cells matured,  
Unicell to trilobite,  
And in sediment sepulchre,  
Laid their vestige day and night.

## III

Winds eroded, rivers sculptured  
On a vast and virgin land,  
Ravished granite into sand,  
Shaped with cutting force unheard,  
Until the bed-rock lay obscured  
Under regolith's deep mantle, and  
As the higher plants began  
Sending thirsty rootlets earthward—

From the dank and misted marshes,  
Through the fern and Equisetum,  
Stumbling, bellowing and harsh as  
Their devouring instincts led them,  
Amphibian to Tyrannosaurus  
Spread the fringe of their freedom.

## IV

Yet, slowly in tectonic years,  
The reptiles forfeited their might,  
Wandered dying in the night.  
And in every hemisphere,  
In the swamps, amid the gloom,  
Beneath the sun and sentinel stars,  
Theriodonts and dinosaurs  
Fell into their sodden tombs.

The conifer, the flowering plant,  
Old eras closed and now began—  
Marsupial, lemur, elephant,  
The age of mammals ruled the land;  
Then, out of pagan germinant,  
Evolved the pageantry of man.

## V

Amid the screaming and the flight,  
Slow turning from the will to cry,  
Man asked the primal question, "Why?"  
Lit his fires to mock the night,  
Scratched in caves each new delight,  
Wandered through the shadowed years,  
Plagued by doubt, cursed by fears,  
Toward a cross, yet out of sight.

Closer now, the watching face,  
Heard his voice, "What is to be?"  
And the stars in echoed space,  
Heard the voice, and turned to see  
If it came from mortal clay,  
Or eternal dust, as they. . . .