

# The Jaguar By Ted Hughes

The apes yawn and adore their fleas in the sun.  
The parrots shriek as if they were on fire, or strut  
Like cheap tarts to attract the stroller with the nut.  
Fatigued with indolence, tiger and lion

Lie still as the sun. The boa-constrictor's coil  
Is a fossil. Cage after cage seems empty, or  
Stinks of sleepers from the breathing straw.  
It might be painted on a nursery wall.

But who runs like the rest past these arrives  
At a cage where the crowd stands, stares, mesmerized,  
As a child at a dream, at a jaguar hurrying enraged  
Through prison darkness after the drills of his eyes

On a short fierce fuse. Not in boredom—  
The eye satisfied to be blind in fire,  
By the bang of blood in the brain deaf the ear—  
He spins from the bars, but there's no cage to him

More than to the visionary his cell:  
His stride is wildernesses of freedom:  
The world rolls under the long thrust of his heel.  
Over the cage floor the horizons come.