

Night safari

*At the Singapore Night Safari, animals roam freely in moonlight
in environments replicating their lives in the wild. Visitors and animals
are separated only by the slimmest of man-made divides.*

I walked the rainforest's moonlit trail
and found myself among leopards.

They were lean, honed by hunting
and hunger and, as flesh and muscle
ebbed and flowed, I saw
down to the beat of blood
and the almost liquid bone.

Their skin was a print of their own
dark paws walking on sand,
their flanks were brandy and treacle,
brown ale held to the light.

I knelt by the narrow divide
and a leopard lay opposite,
mirrored light in his midnight eyes.

He didn't blink and I was held
till he stretched and showed his claws.
I turned to the man who stood next to me.
We're nothing he said.

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