

2002

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Dana Sonnenschein

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Recommended Citation

Sonnenschein, Dana. "In Memory of Hegel, Philosopher among Toque Macaques." *The Iowa Review* 32.2 (2002): 151-152. Web. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.5572>

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DANA SONNENSCHNEIN

In Memory of Hegel, Philosopher among Toque Macaques

For the animal shall not be measured by man...
They are not brethren, they are not underlings;
they are other nations...

—Henry Beston, *The Outermost House*

In memory of Hegel, who scaled
the Buddha in his lifetime,
who twined his tail among the stone
tendrils and trunks of the hidden temple
his kind inherited and he held,
Hegel who found offerings sweet
as all the other flowers.

In memory of Hegel, philosopher
among toque macaques and leader
of his troop for more than five years,
always kind to his mates, playful
and gentle with his many offspring,
Hegel of the black lips, quick
orange eyes and upswept hair,
the long-armed, short-legged lord
of ancient fig trees, thick vines,
and lagoons overgrown with lilies
for whose bulbs he dove and braved
the crocodile. In memory of Hegel,
friend of Jeeves, Hegel who is no
fable, his face in notebooks
and on video, immortal, documented,
Hegel for whom my eyes tear,
even when his *Wild Asia* footage
is rerun as a clip on *Primary Emotions*.
In memory of Hegel, who died when
monkey politics and show of teeth
met shrieking will to power:
Duci bit his face so deeply

he went into shock, and although
Jeeves held him as he shivered,
looked into his eyes and licked
his golden face fur tenderly,
in the end nothing could hold Hegel
but the earth he curled into,
not even love. The macaques come
where he lies on the leaf-litter,
one or two at a time, circle
in memory of Hegel, and some
wave the flies from the corpse
to touch his forehead and cheek
with their long, crooked fingers
and press their faces to his.
All but Duci, now the leader,
who is rough with his mates
and terrorizes the young, chasing
them down to shake them, throw
them, poke their genitals.
One morning three months later,
Duci is found severely beaten,
a swathe of skin ripped from his scalp:
a field biologist says the females
toppled his regime. They have chosen
Jeeves to be the new father
of their children and Hegel's,
his nature or culture a force
for change, still to be reckoned
with, Hegel and the memory
of Hegel, who was known to them
by some other name, in a language
of cry and call, posture and fur,
gesturings of tail and hand.