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# Ode to Stegosaurus

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## *Ode to Stegosaurus*

That magnificent cascade of convenient paired plates—  
not only were they his central heating and cooling, Jurassic  
to mid-Cretaceous, but countless 20th Century kids passed  
their lengthy laughing hour in museums great or small  
or in parks verdant or bare, sequestered snugly there.  
How many of the adults they've become must still possess  
their bronze or plastic replica, once boon companion  
that shared bed and board and primal fear (of Allosaurus,  
T. rex—those implacable, giant-thighed, flesh-devourers,  
stalactite- and stalagmite-teeth ready to tear the instant  
Mom turned out the lights).

O Roof Lizard, stalwart  
walnut-brained ten-ton friend, rotund muncher of fronds  
and leaves, state fossil of Colorado, what hath they wrought,  
these paleontologists bent on revision? They've made you  
more sleek, as if you'd been subjected to serial diet fads  
and they all took. They've shrunk your plates, wiped out  
your stolid symmetry fore and aft by raising your hind legs,  
jacking up your underbelly from the soft green ground.  
We've lost the promise of your familiar body: *Come, ride me  
into darkness, I will carry you and protect you with my many-spiked tail  
and lick your wounds clean with my grass-loving tongue.*