Northwind Escarpment

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NORMAN DUBIE was born in 1945, and has taught in the Writers Workshop at The University of Iowa for the last four years. His first book of poems, Alehouse Sonnets, was published in 1971. His second book, The Illustrations, will be released by Braziller in winter, 1974.

NORTHWIND ESCARPMENT

I believe you, by degrees
the deer are being eaten in the lodges.
You saw the claws in the bedding. And
this:

my daughter and I
in a museum of stuffed animals looking
for a cardinal, that specific bird;
with no luck, leaving the museum
at the exit a small exhibit behind glass:

a screech owl with part of a cardinal
in its mouth. So I asked her not to cry,
and the guard explained that inside
the owl there was nothing but sawdust
and

wire and part of a specific red bird inside
of which there was nothing but sawdust and wire.
She stopped crying by degrees
the deer are being eaten in the lodges.

AFRICA

I expand my chest for the children.

There are no longer the floors
that are ceilings. There is the stone room;
and in the center of the room
I train gladiators, the breeze
from their iron nets releasing me