

Snake

A pity my earliest sight of you
wrote horror, loathing, revulsion on
the tablet of the mind, which letters are,
I fear, ineradicable. Fear
circled me, drew the noose tight,
made you metaphor. I cannot watch
your slithering ease, your perfect
symmetry, your silent essaying
of here to there, the miracle of
your curvic going (the angle unknown
to your fluid motion) without
dread seizing me, some agent of death
pointing a finger. In your innocence,
forgive me. The naturalist,
student of environment, beating
beneficial, beneficial, into my brain,
fails in his argument. My ears
are deaf, like yours.

JOHN V. HICKS