What Makes Us So Different from the Apes?

bright, but, more importantly, because they were neither particularly strong nor swift, they were often short of food and frequently preyed upon by other animals. The best defense against starvation and predation that they were able to come up with was culture (learning better methods of coping), and culture worked rather well in this regard.

Humans, far more than apes, desperately need to rely on complex learned and shared behavior. All human societies have clear rules of social conduct, all have religious beliefs, all have a political system and an economic system, all have a complex kinship system, and all have a fully evolved language. If our early ancestors had failed to develop language and culture, long ago they most likely would have become just another extinct species.

So the most fundamental difference between us and the apes is not our capacity to invent tools, language, and a sexual division of labor; it is the fact that apes can get along quite well without these things while humans cannot. Without tools, language, and a sexual division of labor, our early ancestors would not have continued to evolve; and today apes and any surviving hominids would be far more similar than they now are. It is not that gorillas and chimpanzees are incapable of language or a division of labor; it is that humans are unable to survive without these. In short, we need culture; they do not.

Night is almost day.
Trees are red and gold,
the deer are uneasy.
Her silk cat feet move silently.
She has searched a long time.
The mice and squirrels are quick.
She is tired and small.

He drains the last of the beer.
Can is crushed and tossed aside.
Leaves are crisp with frost;
They break easily beneath his boots.
He turns up his collar against morning,
and cradles the gun like a child.

A death scent startles her;
Their eyes meet in confusion.
The sound shatters daylight,
frightening martens and jays.
Silk feet moving silently,
the bobcat falls.

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