Where are the animals?  
Their multifarious, melifluous voices?  
The rumbles and bays  
harks and moos  
meows and hisses  
and whinneys  
honks and squeaks  
and songs and clicks and squawks and bellowes and trumpets and neighs  
and all that glorious howling?  
The cries and the whispers?  

We made them scream in terror, growl in agony  
until the only whimper left is ours  
and ours is the only scream.

Where are the animals?  
Their multitudinous forms  
furred and horned  
cuddly and sleek  
the colors of rainbows and of old leaves;  
padded, cloven, flippered, clawed, fingered and webbed and hooved;  
the cloven and the majestics?  

We got rid of them for fun.  
We ate them.  
We wore them.  
We hung them on our iridescent walls made of artificial board.  
We ground them up and fed them to  
the ones we ate,  
the ones we wore,  
the ones we hung on our iridescent walls made of artificial board.

Where are the animals?  
Their loving-wise, haunted-hunted eyes?  

We bloodied them,  
blinded them,  
in-toxic-ated them  
and one by one  
we put them all out.

Where are the animals?  
We are lonely.

Yesterday, in the mirror of Creation  
we saw only ourselves.  
Today, there is only ourselves to see.

Where are the animals?  
Are we left then with only our own voices?  

Not to worry!  
The screech and the grating of our machines  
drown the sounds of our own whispering.

Where are the animals?  
Are we alone  
with our own image  
staring  
back  
at us  
from the pool in the Wilderness?  
Where are the animals?  
Why aren't the species speciating?  

They are there:  
terror-free in un-bound repose  
in the womb of eternity,  
their eyes being their own again,  
they watch us;  
they wait  
for us to finish our own destruction,  
when it will be safe for them to be born once more.

**PAULETTE CALLEN**