HAVEPOETRY.COM

MATTHEW ZAPRUDER

SUN BEAR

yesterday at the Oakland zoo
I was walking alone for a moment
past the enclosure holding the sun bear
also known as beruang madu
it looked at me without interest
it has powerful jaws and truly loves honey
it sleeps in a high hammock
its claws look made out of wood
and if it dreams at all it is of Malaysia
home of its enemy the clouded leopard
a gorgeous arboreal
hunting and eating machine
whose coat resembles a python
now it is night and the zoo is closed
some animals are sleeping
the nocturnals moving in their cages
getting ready to hunt nothing
I don’t know why but I feel sure
something has woken the sun bear
it is awake in the dark
maybe it is my spirit animal
I am reading about the early snow
that has fallen on the Northeast
all the power shutting down
the weather going insane
the animals cannot help us
they go on moving without love
though we look into their eyes and feel
sure we see it there and maybe
we are right nothing
can replace animal love
not even complicated human love
we sometimes choose to allow
ourselves to be chosen by
despite what everyone knows
the problem is
in order to love anything
but an animal you cannot allow

yourself to believe in those things
that are if we don’t stop them
going to destroy us