

Survival of the Fittest

"Give orange me give eat orange me eat orange give me eat orange give me you."

-Nim Chimpsky

It is true that monsters occur.

Nestled somewhere in the Pacific Northwest
her neighbor hangs a plaster cast
on the wall in the kitchen.

He runs his fingers distractedly over each
of its five massive, brittle indentations,
bowed like an archipelago – like toes.

Doctors, in fact, are quite interested in monsters.

But when they found the first of many mammoths,
it was a terrible shock:
a static, stagnant show of glaciated teeth and hair.

They look carefully at monsters.

In terms of phenotypic plasticity,
your blindness is non-standard.
But surely, they once argued, the blind can adapt.

Now Nim Chimpsky tries to tell us
that language is not species-specific,
and wishes that her younger brother
were a bit less Cartesian.

But she cannot get out one sound sentence.

The doctors really were very rigorous.
And in the tracking race against the British,
the aborigines were already three days ahead

when they just gave up.
As though they wished to say, silently,
This is silly. We're not playing this game, anymore.

Hopeful monsters.