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## Bruises

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## Bruises

Here is the scene—  
the basement of a Chicago zoo,  
a locked room inside of which  
screams and flails  
a chimpanzee; outside the door  
stands the man who brought her  
from the French Cameroons,  
who dressed her in pinafores,  
made home movies of her  
riding a tricycle,  
feeding a baby,  
then sent her off.  
He has just come out  
of the cell where she  
hugged him, sobbed, clung  
to his body, moved her  
soft lips against his cheek.

He listens to her screeches,  
stands in the cool narrow hallway  
touching himself where the chimp  
had touched, as if these were  
bruises and he a mother  
discovering for herself the pain  
of a child's needs.  
As he walks down the hall,  
the screams diminish—  
they could be the sound  
of his shoes lifting  
from the clean linoleum  
or the muffled whistles  
of a starling somewhere outside.