

David Ruekberg  
3558 O-at-ka Creek Rd.  
LeRoy, NY 14482  
585-329-9834  
david@restory.net

## Saturno Devorando a Su Hijo\*

At one time, even the West African kept slaves on earth  
and overran his neighbors. The Chinese and the Nez Percé too.  
The Indian bound captives to anthills. The East Indian, in fact,  
though in Westerns, they're American. So a culture is fashioned.  
The American white male is now master on earth, by virtue of  
at first his machinery as a more perfect extension  
of hunger; and second, by vast holdings of land  
making manifest a version of democracy. Soon  
it will be the Arab. Then another. Then another. In time  
(it will come later than one thinks, or wishes) in time, the species  
will follow all species. It will not die out. It will not die out  
all at once. But it will die out. It will be no one's fault.

Nothing is anyone's fault. The law of tooth and nail  
reigns in the discount superstore, on the freeway,  
lurks in the dust between Betelgeuse and infinitude,  
between the kitchen and the bedroom, in the tin milkbox unused  
but reminiscent on the front porch. By virtue of its artifice,  
the jug of rice on an endcap means the ruin of ten thousand lives,  
and my new car is sufficiently huge to eat your new car,  
and does so every day. The law commands the cells' bloom  
in the body, light's intercourse with matter, the ions' banquet  
of rust. Its seeds are intelligence, grief, and even the savor  
of wild strawberries and milk. Ponder these miracles.

Invent a God or scientific method to fix them to an image  
that can hang on the wall or parade as ghosts inside  
a cathode ray tube. Make of them stories: *Once upon a time  
a fox guarded a henhouse. Soon the hens were gone. Then the fox  
was gone. Grass moved in. Then the henhouse was gone.  
The grass held out a little longer, then it was gone too.*  
And so forth.

---

\* Title of Goya's painting in the Prado, Madrid.