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The Link

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The Link

for Loren Eiseley

There were days dark
Pterodactyls rose

Like capes above the tree line,
Wingspans vast, improbable.

By a brook I followed footprints
Big as flagstones, almost round,

That disappeared in the water
And never emerged on the opposite bank.

Heavy rain turned woods to jungle,
An aggressive green menagerie

Of dragonflies, of black trunks
Heaving like great saurians.

I could blink into a world
That had no place for small boys.

I'd be the frail white thing
That couldn't camouflage itself,

There being no precedent for whiteness,
Just me, dwarfed in humid air

By languid vines and leaves
The size of suit coats.

I'd tell myself exactly who I was
And not believe it, forget parents,

Forget school, the missing tonsils,
Forget that time crawled all around me,

Paws still part fin.
I could forget a time was coming

When woods would just be woods, trees
Trees, and the closest link between me

And this excavation of a memory not mine
Would be the garden snake I'd jab

With a spade, sweating hard,
Chopping till my heart slowed down.



Fred Muratori received a master's degree in creative writing from Syracuse University, where he has taught in the English Department. His poems have appeared in many journals including *Poetry Northwest* and *Mississippi Review*. Mr. Muratori has recently returned to graduate work in the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University.

— Fred Muratori