

## *ADAGIO*

J.B. Drori

Time paused...

Twilight arrived in the forest on tiptoes.  
It peeked through maple branches  
and unreeled autumnal shadows.  
Fluttering gold and crimson leaves  
floated softly to the patient ground.

A tawny cougar, green eyes flashing,  
wended unhurriedly among broken twigs.  
It emerged from the tall grass  
by the edge of the wood on the hill,  
its black snout, sniffing.

In slow measured feline beat,  
it curled its serpentine tail into a brush-tip,  
lithely stepped on the sandy slope,  
and headed for the harp-shaped pond,  
throwing me at the shoreline a side glance.

It scanned the beach intently,  
lapped up gulps of pristine water,  
droplets raining down its jowls,  
turned and climbed up the incline,  
disappearing among the trees.

I nestled in the soft sand,  
basking in the warmth of mother earth,  
and gazed up at the first stars, low in the eastern sky.  
The stillness deepened, the light faded.  
A loon's plaintiff call echoed from the distant shore.

Nothing stirred.  
Primal tranquility suffused me.  
A moment of eternity -  
an ineffable transcendence.  
Time paused...