

Black & White **Shades of Gray**

“The Vastness of the Smallest (Yet discovered)”

While reading by a pond one day
Attention turned another way
To focus on the lowest point
Aside my feet and to left at bay
Why, I cannot quite explain
Except that for a moment plain
The vastness of the smallest ground
Became a world unto its own
And there I saw a crawling bug
A shell of black, red, and other
Appearance ant or something else
I cannot tell from simple knowledge
It marched along, in broken cadence
Treaded over and under with every effort
From where it came I do not know
Except to say with vigor so
Around its path a mix of matter
Of fallen seeds, and nuts and branches
I'm sure much more than eye does notice
First glance of smallest in its vastness
Perhaps a closer look would offer
Much more in store to scribe in verse
Expand the value of this coffer
To add the more to something terse
The moment, though plain, a time to muse
Of detail for which I could only imagine
Some inner parts of a crawling bug
The outer world around its path
The eggs from which it must have came
The journey on, its aftermath
Of much I have not yet described
Nor can remember as if to try
Save only for another day to look intent, then reply

H. Kirk Rainer

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About the verse: “The Vastness of the Smallest”

My immediate impulse on sight of the bug was its mechanized motion and apparent determination – with the surrounding area (of dirt and such) almost incidental. Admitted in the verse, and to repeat, the moment is described without detail and depth. But the impulse was obviously enough to write about and is perhaps one of those instances where the idea (and its expression) far exceeds the written account in terms of my thoughts and the details of the bug and plot of ground.

Attention to a bug is common – since most of us encounter them from time to time with spontaneity of averting or destroying the pestilence. But given my mindset at the time, perhaps absorbed in the subject matter of a book, the impression was vivid enough to the least out something on paper.

Maybe this attempt was not about the bug at all – but maybe about trying to force something on paper – even when the effort does not render the intended outcome. Whatever the real purpose or intention, my effort must be counted for something if just to bore the reader with trivialities and blandness. Maybe the next such approach will be more productive or redeeming.