May the Glad Inherit

by Mathew Paust

They have at birth wings of the glad,

before they understand they're born to die

before they've found a god or learned denial to ease them on the way

they're bubbly babes who trust their moms if not, as well, their fathers--

their cries are healthy cries, relishing comfort and love and suchthey'd rather warble, praising wonders, than simply screech

All creatures know death at their very core, a tacit defaultand instinct, of innocents of the fruit of Knowledge, leads them undespairing

all the way

but comprehension brings a whole new game of espy and denythe accelerating recognition of signs ever encroaching on deceptive routes of escape

The deep-sleep ogre that flees a dream-shouted *BOO!* returns by day

in smug authority dress, casting looks and toxic odor the dashed expectation, sting of a quiet *no*, grownup's tears, grief's piteous wail...

things that tug the ragged curtain back enough for the glimpse that chills all hearts, that those with wings of the glad can leave behind

Those with wings of the glad carry merriment in their eyes and their laughter is jolly and kind though they cry and die like the rest