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Rattlesnake

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Rattlesnake

R.G. Ziemer

No graceful coils
No spiraled cone
No diamond pyramid of scales
No you bend around a boulder
at the sound of my approach,
bunched upon your scaly self,
rope-thick doubled
all the stronger to strike.
You reach out,
blacktongue flickering.
angry at my trespass.
That I understand,
and thank you for that warning rattle
for it's more than I have had
from other snakes of my acquaintance.
And if your mouth must drip with venom
with the savor of your speech,
as you unsheathe your needly fangs,
your beady eyes unwavering,
in expectation of the chance
to stab and clutch and kill and eat,
well who am I to judge?
Be the serpent as God made you.
If the Devil wore your form
you ought to take it as a compliment.