

Venn Will I See You?

Let X equal the set of all things human.
Let Y equal the set of all things animal.
Let XY equal the weight of all noises
produced in the biomass, including languages.

X minus Y equals a silent record of memory that is a shame
to lose upon dying. The weight of such memory sustains one until that time.
Let Y minus X equal a shirt I never collected from a girl's room.
Negative XY equals the force required to sunder awareness from self-

awareness. I lost Y when our first child was conceived.
Within the set of X is subset Q, the negative of which equals
quiet, when all the people in a given household are asleep
at the same time. It is dark and primal

whenever Y is separated from X. There are jungles
where we used to hunt, and broad meadows
where once we gathered fruit, all while silent.
Where the dark circles intersect beneath our eyes,
where yes becomes I don't know, Y is indiscernible

from X, or from its cognate, a pile of leaves.
The pile is raked by a determined child
who waits beneath them for someone to come home,
so he may erupt, and watch the suddenness
drain from his father's face like leaves fluttering
in the air at dusk, in a slow re-
cognition of their overlapping selves.

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