

In the Bahamas

I once swam with sharks
graceful indifferent dangerous

I fingered sea anemones
languid as dancers
my father loved to watch in Tongatapu

once we dissected a shark
in our school laboratory
stroked it till its knife-edged skin
drew blood from our fingers

we took it in turns to swing
her amniotic sac from side to side
make three perfect embryos
move slowly up and down

I wish we hadn't stopped them
being born

*earlier version in pamphlet
'Why are the Lions Crying?'
Buff Press*

new poems:

if I were a muskox

i.m. Barry Lopez, 1945 – December 2020

I'd think sedges and lichen
I'd moon over them breathe over them
pull at them with my soft lips
savour bluegrass willow herb
bladderwort campion
foxtail cowberry
mountain sorrel Labrador tea
(this last trending on eBay but not common)
when I had eaten I'd caress them gently
stroke them with my wise beard
shake long feathery skirts
bury my face in your already thick coat
murmur *umingmak* to you my little poppet calf
umingmak it's only by saying one's proper name
one finds one's place in the universe

In Isolation ...

this is what we need

peace
a quiet lapping of water
the wonderful dignity of trees

we need to learn
how we fit
in the infinity of things

