

Old mama turtle
watches her river go by
and warms her worn
enamel shell
under the mid-summer sun

Water-wrinkled skin
toughened and dried by the heat
covers short limbs
made for earth-crawling
and river-swimming

Dust fills the cracks
on her patterned
scored back

Long
curved claws
will dig
for food
and to hide her smooth
soft belly
from clumsy hands
or preying teeth

Old mama turtle
buries
in cold
damp dirt
her painted belly
scratched with age
and deep stories
of moving
from river current
to mud-packed bank
to river stream again

But etched
in coppered eyes
are the marks
of her earthwise belly
for the day and night skies
to hold

And old mama turtle knows
their gold and silver globes
sliding along
her dark waters

glynis 1982



Creepers

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