

Silver Boy Tells Us About The Man In The Dark Hat

by Diane Wakoski

*—After a discussion with Martha Bates,
who panics when she thinks about death*

When we finally spoke about death, he, who is called Silver Boy, told me to look into the wolves' den, far into the woods, where the oaks and sycamores scare you, and I declared I would find a way to understand it all.

Silver Boy reminded me of ice on the tall pergola,
of babel,
the chip in the door,
a Diamond Dog in the room,
a locked den full of trophies.

And as if coins were tumbling out of his mouth, he said, "just think of death as the beginning of a children's story?"

Maybe. Except we don't like children or allow them here.
Too many ghosts in the silver room.

"Irrelevant." He's talking again. "We pretend stories are for children because we can't admit we need them."

Maybe. But every fairy tale is about emeralds or diamonds, sometimes rubies, and the King of Spain. In "The Twelve Dancing Princesses," even the leaves of the trees are made of jewels. But the wolves wait in the real forest without jewels. You imply beauty everywhere.

"Then look at death as a fairy tale," Silver Boy repeated.

I told him that I never expected
to meet the Man in the Dark Hat. Or that The King
of Spain would be my consort. Now, in my story
it is autumn, though the leaves
are still deceptively green as emeralds.

"Don't panic," he said. "The Diamond Dog has always been more than crushed carbon."