

*Christopher Wallace-Crabbe*  
Beasts

Elastic, subtle, canny, rapid  
or maybe merely dogged  
which as the very word would suggest  
    can apply to them all too well,  
animals inhabit  
another world of cognition

from you and me  
(whatever you reckon  
about the deep intellect  
    of your siamese cat  
which mainly behaves like a member  
of your home team).

Agouti and antelope  
are just not human at all,  
though dolphins can sing along  
    if not exactly in tune,  
while the lion with its pelt of gold  
simply exceeds us, a king.

Sheer glory, those muscles rippling  
under a sleek pelt – for those  
who respond to such beauty;  
    we know too little  
about the introspection  
even of mares and stallions.

We are all tempted to say  
that a dog could feel guilty:  
our own Fido, at least.  
    But envy? Or nostalgia?  
And does the bounding leopard  
rejoice in his great leap ?