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## Darwin.

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Gail Reub  
437 Adams  
Fort Atkinson

DARWIN

I

His holy  
    slowly  
        mulled over  
    matter

not all 'delirium  
    of delight'  
        as were the forests  
of Brazil

'Species are not  
    (it is like confessing  
        a murder)  
immutable'

He was often becalmed  
    in this Port Desire by illness  
        or rested from species  
at billiard table

As to Man  
    'I believe Man ...  
        in the same predicament  
with other animals'

II

Cordilleras to climb - Andean  
    peaks 'tossed about  
        like the crust  
of a broken pie'

Icy wind  
    Higher, harder  
        Chileans advised eat onions  
for shortness of breath

Heavy on him:  
Andes miners carried up  
great loads - not allowed  
to stop for breath

Fossil bones near Santa Fé  
Spider-bite-scauld  
Fever  
Tended by an old woman

'Dear Susan ...  
I am ravenous  
for the sound  
of the pianoforte'

### III

FitzRoy blinked -  
sea-shells on mountain tops!  
The laws of change  
rode the seas

without the good captain  
who could not concede  
land could rise from the sea  
until - before his eyes

the earthquake -  
Talcahuana Bay drained out -  
an all-water wall  
thrown up from the ocean

Six seconds  
and the town demolished  
The will of God?  
Let us pray

And now the Galapagos Islands -  
hideous black lava  
The shore so hot  
it burned their feet

thru their boots  
    Reptile life  
        Melville here later  
said the chief sound was a hiss

A thousand turtle monsters  
    drive together to the water  
        Blood-bright crabs hunt ticks  
on lizards' backs

Flightless cormorants  
    Penguins and seals  
        those cold-sea creatures  
here in tropical waters

For FitzRoy it was Hell  
    but for Darwin Paradise Puzzle  
        with the jig-saw gists  
beginning to fit

#### IV

Years - balancing  
    probabilities  
        I am ill, he said  
and books are slow work

Studied pigeons  
    barnacles, earthworms  
        Extracted seeds  
from bird dung

Brought Drosera home  
    saw insects trapped  
        by its tentacles - the fact  
that a plant should secrete

an acid acutely akin  
    to the digestive fluid  
        of an animal! Years  
till he published it

He wrote Lyell: Don't forget  
to send me the carcass  
of your half-bred African cat  
should it die

V

I remember, he said.  
those tropical nights at sea -  
we sat and talked  
on the booms

Tierra del Fuego's  
shining glaciers -  
translucent blue  
clear down to the indigo sea

(By the way Carlyle  
thought it most ridiculous  
that anyone should care  
whether a glacier

moved a little quicker  
or a little slower  
or moved at all)  
Darwin

sailed out  
of Good Success Bay  
to carcass-  
conclusions -

the universe  
not built by brute force  
but designed by laws  
with the details left

to the working out of chance  
'Let each man hope  
and believe  
what he can'

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