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On the Life Cycle of the Australian Walking Stick

Bennett Tracy Huffman
Concordia University - Portland

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On the Life Cycle of the Australian Walking Stick

A cartoon, at first, born from a tiny marble egg
the baby practically runs through the new universe,
splay-legged, from the cramp
of being five months in its capsule.
When the running slows,
and at first molting and instantaneous
expansion of two or three times,
the eating begins, and never ends
for females, and pauses for the man only to mate.

These spiny, delicate creatures
are prone to accidents.
A female just emerges from her final molting
was mated over early by a mature male,
and her hind legs never did quite work right.
And when the males have been loving,
hanging on to their dear mates' shoulders,
long the hunger that consumes them
becomes a desire to eat the lover's antennae.

When the males are dead and gone,
for they wear out from constant loving,
and hundreds of eggs litter the forest floor,
the mothers, too, begin to die,
falling one by one from the thorny sky
to rest nearly like leaves on the ground.

Bennett Tracy Huffman