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## Rising Early

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# Rising Early

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*Howard Schaap*

Ideas, too, must ooze to the surface at night  
while men and women shut themselves  
into dreams they forget, while the fallow ground  
collects dew and the grass emerges like stubble on chins.  
Spread the tufts of grass bristles and there  
under the flashlight of heaven lie  
the naked lengths of pink worms,  
silent-blind, fat, seemingly there for the taking. Yet you  
must be quick and specific, determined and consistent  
in your pulling. Unless it's a rain-soaked night—  
then they lie in wanton abandon, a dime a dozen,  
like too many ideas that can't all be good,  
so many you don't know where to start  
but stumble around till one by one  
they unsquirt themselves down their  
holes.

Or, in greater nightmare yet,  
your idea-worms, kept too long  
underground in the winter of your  
brain, with the first drenching rains  
come gasping to the surface,  
blindly racing suicidally  
for the open coolness  
of pavements where they're  
smashed flat by the obliviousness  
of passing cars.

More often than not,  
you find you've awakened too late.  
All the bird poets have already  
raked the ground of the cosmos,  
have already pulled free the few  
good ideas from their rootings  
in the firmament, leaving you  
with the grass to mow.