

Ode to the Panda

by Mary Larsen

Three caretakers
juggle apples
and push ten-gallon tubs of fruit
frozen in ice
around
you.
Monochrome
behemoth
ailuropoda melanoleuca,
ambassador of lazy days.
Spending them
climbing
eating
sleeping
dreaming
your panda dreams.
Surrounded
on all sides,
tourists
wink with their flash photography.
They think you aren't paying attention.
They bother you, though.
But it takes too much energy
to stand up
on your lethargic hind legs
and become like your brethren.
Better
to roll over
in the grass
with legs
outstretched
and
yawn.