

A Romance for the Wild Turkey

by [Paul Zimmer](#)

They are so cowardly and stupid
Indians would not eat them
For fear of assuming their qualities.

The wild turkey always stays close
To home, flapping up into trees
If alarmed, then falling out again.
When shot it explodes like a balloon
Full of blood. It bathes by grinding
Itself in coarse dirt, is incapable
Of passion or anger, knows only
Vague innocence and extreme caution,
Walking around in underbrush
Like a cantilevered question mark,
Retreating at least hint of danger.

I hope when the wild turkey
Dreams at night it flies high up
In gladness under vast islands
Of mute starlight, its silhouette
Vivid in the full moon, guided always
By radiant configurations, high
Over chattering fields of corn
And the trivial fires of men,
Never to land again nor be regarded
As fearful, stupid, and unsure.

"A Romance for the Wild Turkey" by Paul Zimmer, from *Crossing to Sunlight Revisited*. © The University of Georgia Press, 2007.