A Death in the African Dust.

Dust lies soft on an African plain;
Heat bakes all into a languid calm;
Dry stillness seeps slowly through the day.
Wildebeest, impala, and zebra too,
Scattered as toys in some wilderness garden,
Hover gently in a heat haze as they graze.

Golden eyes gaze, impassive with purpose,
From grass that masks her royal power.
Wrestling and rolling in the dust nearby,
Her tumbling cubs, playful in their casual power,
As they look to their role
In this ancient rite to come.

In single simple ripple of power,
She moves from gaze to liquid gait,
As focus sharpens on a primal need.
Her brood now quiet as she moves out,
Into the day, into the heat of slow creeping stalk.
Heavy as a golden ghost she floats
Towards the herd, unaware still of their part in a ritual
About to begin, about to end
A life to feed a life.

Patience holds back every paw, then gently moves it in,
In to the thick grass, harsh scrub, tough trees.
On she glides, death closing...now skittish
Zebra breaks...now no longer languid,
Lioness lunges, leaps and plunges;
In surging silence she plucks life
From that African plain,
As dust in a killing cloud shrouds the end;
One desperately final braying neigh,
Then down, the kicking twitch and glassy bulging eye
Tell of a sighing, pink foamy dying.

While the Queen, in graceful detachment,
Pants open-mouthed, her cubs rumble up to begin
The ripping at, tearing of and gorging.
A lion has killed again and once again
The dust on the plains will settle
Into heatbaked stillness,
The stillness of life
And death in Africa.