

**A Secret Place in the Woods  
That Only the Natives Know About**

I have a pet wolf  
no bigger than my palm  
who curls up on my belly at night to sleep.

I try not to disturb him  
for he hates to be bothered  
with the memory of grass

and dirt.  
He told me one night of  
an Indian Mound. His Indian Mound.

He skulked there where the dry  
February breeze coerced  
last Autumn's leaves to dance  
in ceremonial firelight.

They scraped and fluttered  
gyrating into the hollow of the dirt hill  
and he watched the ghosts

of Shawnee Indians  
crumble into his earth.

My wolf whines at the mention of the beechwoods  
and the maples and the oaks  
and he hates the grass that no longer grows under their  
impenetrable roof.

The wolf on my belly often growls  
deep in his throat  
at the approaching dawn.

*Christina L. Smith*