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The Great Deluge and Its Coming

We were tangled together and carried roughly by the vicious waters, thrown about, buffeted cruelly

in the racing surge. We were a snarl of bald pates, bellies and spines with their multiple links,

all wound together, a bolus, hairy bodies, snouts of fur, woolly appendages, scaly appendages, fingers, hooves, claws, a clamor of sputterings,

groans, and screeches tumbling over and over, each of us surfacing

momentarily, taking air from the sky, then submerged again, tossed, undone, entwined anew.

Two spider monkeys, dripping and wheezing, scrambled over my head for a place on top.

A hoary marmot

grabbed my ankle, slipped, caught a scrabble of branches drifting by carrying a rooster and corn snake.

A weasel-like creature curled around my neck, jumped to the grizzled back of a warthog thrashing in the wake. What was it clawing and clutching at my shoulder?

Once, in the flooding mayhem, I came face-to-face with a blue-faced mandrill

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and his fear-whitened eyes. Once a spotted bat grasped my collar, hung there until I was hit by a wave

and wrenched away clinging upside down to a mule braying its harsh treble.

For a distance a dog, a dingo, held on

by her teeth clamped to the belt at my waist. I circled her mangy head with one arm, clung with the other to the bulk of a musk ox

pitching past

in the swell. Seeds and nuts and the roots of tundra grasses were matted in his long hanging fur, among which roots crouched numerous mice harboring nits and fleas and wingless flies.

We were mewing and choking, spitting and barking in our plight, the bundle of us in a jumble, struggling, shifting constantly, losing hold in white water, breaking apart,

carried away, found again. We were knocked and shaken, buffeted against rocks,
engulfed flailing,
swung into shore by the current and jerked out
to mid-torrent again by the same.
Direction was destiny.

But were those really white wings spread wide,
gliding silently over us
all the way in the tumult?
Or was it simply a deeper heaven of moonlit clouds calm

in a certain prophecy
that hovered above us through the night?
Or was it the ultimate stillness of the dependable void
that kept us comforted

until we were brought, finally floating
slowly together, almost sleeping,
into a growing light burning and blinding
like the conflagration of dawn over an open sea?