

## TO A CHEETAH IN THE MOSCOW ZOO

Furs this expensive you normally only find wrapped around  
the shoulders  
Of gangsters' molls outside the casino, movements this slinky  
Only on the catwalk from the androgynous models,  
Eyes dilating in the flashbulbs. As lean a feline  
As Pisanello once painted with a ravished brush  
(The fur spotted, whiskery, a golden fleece).  
She sashays swishing up and back. Her spine measures out  
The least movement.

To change direction  
Millimeters in front of the ditch is something for which  
She doesn't even need eyes. There's nothing out there  
For the ear or the sensitive nose but the noise and sweat  
Beyond the wire fence, where those monkeys congregate  
With their baby carriages at visiting time. Her breath  
Coming hard, she magics the fetor of the metropolis  
Into a charmed ozone . . . the white ribbons  
In the girls' hair into strips of gazelle meat. Her fine head,  
No bigger than your fist, keeps its alert posture  
As she spies zebras in the flickering at the gates of Moscow.  
Then she yawns, the prisoner of the cement.

DURS GRÜNBEIN (1962– ), Germany

*Cheetah Siesta*, Robert Bateman (1930– ), Canada

