

Neil Halstead

"Them"

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They came in countless numbers
Without hope, without hopelessness
On jelly limbs
Faceless
Crawling out of the living sea.
The green world welcomed them
It sweetened the air for them
And above all, the sun warmed them
And dried them
By night, in dreamless sleep
The new life filled them
Piping strange harmonies in the blood
Fusing the beginnings of bones
Then hunger awoke them
And sleepy with a sense of being
They arose and moved inland
Fulfilling their new-found needs
They called out to one another
The winds carried their cries
Over mountains, through forests,
Across deserts and oceans
Great distances were traveled
The strong devoured the weak
The quick devoured the slow
The cunning devoured the foolish
They fed on each other without malice
Or remorse
Their purpose was survival
Life was their achievement
They formed into groups
Some took to the air
Some burrowed underground
And some returned to the water
From icecap to icecap
The globe rang with their cleverness
And with each turn
Gave them meaning

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