

Ode to a House Centipede

Mark Lamoureux

Scutigera coleoptrata, execrated
dasher, content to leave us
as you prefer, most alone.

Who suffers our dumb dread,
you who are happy
to patrol our waste

& feed on the children
of our filth,
leaving nothing behind

yourself save a desiccated
thorax or a tangle
of emptied limbs—

savage cuneiform
to message us
no hard feelings.

Your fleet loops & uncanny
stillness contemplating
your million moving parts

in impossible silence—nothing like us:
yatterers, discorders,
writhing in clumps

like your prey, our own shadow-
selves equally
ubiquitous & tenacious;

you have no taste for us,
or for scraps,
but blood alone,

immune to our fear, you are
an avatar
of it—Silurian feather

for Hecate's crazy coif,
you who deal with our pests
& slip into the shadows

like everything else
we must abide
but cannot understand.