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# Trying to Explain Who I Am

by Fredrick Zydek

Up among the cross beams and rafters,  
families and tribes live out their lives  
without us. Barn owls and spiders,  
swallows, hives of bees, beam-strolling  
mice, tree squirrels and occasional lizards

pursue the meaning of their existence  
with no more interest in what we do below  
than tree nesters show for the busy lives  
of wolves, rabbits, and bears who journey  
far below the safety of their airy abodes.

Perhaps we are to them what lobsters  
are to dolphins: bottom creatures not worth  
much notice in the grand total of things.  
We conduct the carryings-on of the world  
they seldom view with even vague curiosity.

We are ants tending our cows and little  
green gardens, creatures who stir up dust  
and flies, dry grass savers, manure pushers,  
hoarders of corn and silage, a civilization  
of creatures that can grow neither fur

nor feathers. Sometimes I sing to them.  
I want those who enjoy loft-living to know  
there is music in our speech as well.  
Once in a while I give long speeches explaining  
who I am. All the creatures but one ignore

me. I might as well be a Jehovah's Witness  
trying to account for the rash of earthquakes  
the world has seen in the last ten years.  
Only the owl refuses to snub me. He doubts  
what I claim and continues to ask, "Who?"

