The California Writers Series presents

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7 p.m. Wednesday, January 17, 2007
Dezember Room, Walter W. Stiern Library
California State University, Bakersfield

My Life

After Henri Micheaux

Somehow it got into my room.
I found it, and it was, naturally, trapped.
It was nothing more than a frightened animal.
Since than I raised it up.
I kept it for myself, kept it in my room,
kept it for its own good.
I named the animal, My Life.
I found food for it and fed it with my bare hands.
I let it into my bed, let it breathe in my sleep.
And the animal, in my love, my constant care,
grew up to be strong, and capable of many clever tricks.
One day, quite recently,
I was running my hand over the animal's side
and I came to understand
that it could very easily kill me.
I realized, further, that it would kill me.
This is why it exists, why I raised it.
Since then I have not known what to do.
I stopped feeding it,
only to find that its growth
has nothing to do with food.
I stopped cleaning it
and found that it cleans itself.
I stopped singing it to sleep
and found that it falls asleep faster without my song.
I don't know what to do.
I no longer make My Life do tricks.
I leave the animal alone
and, for now, it leaves me alone, too.
I have nothing to say, nothing to do.
Between My Life and me,
a silence is coming.
Together, we will not get through this.

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