**Solitude** *by Dawn Smart (September 2020)*

Do we think the polar bear is lonely  
in its solitary lumber across melting ice floes?

Is the artic tern nervous  
as it flies alone across twenty thousand miles of open ocean?

Does the sea turtle on its underwater migration  
look around for fellow travelers and wonder what it said wrong?

Is the leopard yearning for its mate  
as it stalks a vast seared savannah?

Does the mole sometime fear the dark,  
claustrophobic as it digs beneath your lawn?

Does the wolverine’s endlessly grouchy nature  
scare away potential friends?

Is the sleepy-looking sloth just so immobile its peers pass it by as it hangs and hangs, waiting disconsolate as the forests disappear in South America?

Is that koala hugging the eucalyptus tree in grief for its long-gone mother?

Do they envy the shoulder-to-shoulder penguin colonies of Antarctica?  
The pile of prairie dogs in dens on the American Plains?   
The flocks of birds and schools of fish that move as one?

Do we? Perhaps we can only admire their courage, perseverance, love, self-care and independence. Or emulate it.