

# Terrorists

*Roald Hoffmann*

In the dark that is the bed,  
in the dark, that is the sole  
room in this life, we seem

to be taming a cat. The woman  
with me is wife, or mother,  
or both, and we are intent

on this impossible task of  
training an animal we can't  
see. We do hear it, its pacing,

always out of reach, and when  
it jumps (this we have learned  
to fear most, the silent space

of its jump) it lands claws out,  
with the smooth unthinking cat  
cut of claw into skin and flesh.

The sheets are twisted, they will  
be bloody in the morning. Lately  
it seems to be timing its jumps.

The woman and I are not sure  
who in this night of training,  
will be taught to kill whom.

# The Man for Whom Everything Came Easy

*Roald Hoffmann*

came from an immigrant family,  
and didn't own a book  
until he was 16  
So his first desires were simple:  
Fournier playing the Bach cello sonatas, an illuminated globe.  
Since he did well in school,  
and this was America,  
it was easy.  
He worked hard,  
did interesting research  
and in time he could buy  
a Nikon with two telephoto lenses  
and a second recording of the Bach sonatas  
(he had made a mistake about Fournier).  
He was a little unhappy  
that when they needed a new second car  
his wife said that his joking suggestion of a Porsche  
just didn't make sense.  
Invitations to speak came from all over the world.  
What he wanted most (but this he was afraid to say)  
was that his children read good books,  
and not waste their time on hard rock.  
This was more difficult to arrange,  
because you couldn't pay your children  
to do what they didn't like to do. But in time  
they grew up, picked up Tolstoy  
and even, once in a while,  
put on the cello sonatas on the record player.  
The man who seemed to do everything well  
actually began to like rock,  
at least to dance to it  
(he still complained that he couldn't hear the lyrics).  
Running six miles each day,  
he had less trouble than his wife in keeping his weight down.  
He began to fly first class,  
and sat in on a class on Kierkegaard.  
The man who had everything  
now told his new intellectual friends:  
What I would really like is to have my soul  
as it is not.