

Rattlesnake

No graceful coils
or spiraled cone
No diamond pyramid of scales.

No
you bend around a boulder
at the sound of my approach,
bunched upon your scaly self,
ropethick doubled
the stronger to strike.

You
reach out,
blacktongue flickering,
angry at my trespass.

That
I understand,
and thank you
for that warning rattle.
It's more than I have had
from other snakes
of my acquaintance.
And if your mouth must drip
with venom
with the savor of your speech,
if you unsheathe your needly fangs,
your beady eyes
unwavering
in expectation of the chance
to stab and clutch
and kill and eat,
well who am I to judge?
Be the serpent
as God made you.
If the Devil wore your form
you ought to take it
as a compliment.