

An Element of Style

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A noun by definition
can be almost anything:
an ounce, a bone, a tempest, a tiger,
but by itself
a noun sits helpless on the page:
the ounce feeling weightless
and unimportant,
the bone, though hard, durable
and proud of its history,
can't even lift a finger.
The tempest, well,
you can imagine the wind and rain
of its destructive power
totally one-dimensional.
And then the tiger
majestic in stealth and ferocity
forced to lie in wait until
a verb comes along, any verb,
tug, or push or pull or snarl
so it can pad over to sniff the ounce
or lick the bone as a trophy
of its last conquest
or dig its fangs into the tempest
because it isn't afraid of anything,
neither man nor gun,
the deadliest nouns of all.