

The Eloquent Young Elephant



Did you hear the elephants
Trumpeting last night?
They thundered past my bedroom
The earth rumbled back in fright.

They were going to fight a battle
Thump-galumping off to war
Did you hear a wee small voice say
"what are we fighting for?"

Did you see the elephant kerfuffle
As they stopped marching on?
A toppled pile of elephants
A jungle tangle until dawn

As they were unravelling
Their tails and trunks and ears
They had a chance to listen
Did you have a chance to hear?

The smallest of the elephants
The one who'd asked "What for?"
Crawled out from underneath and said
"I will not go to war!"

"I may be young but listen
I'm old enough to know
If I go on to battle
I might....
Die."

Well...

You could have heard the moon cry
As the night continued on
As that elephant elaborated
On what was right and wrong

Did you see the older elephants
Start to twitch their trembling ears?
Did you see those elder elephants
Weep enormous tears?

Did you think they'd flood the jungle
And we'd all float out to sea?
(I was a little worried -
I'm a fretful chimpanzee)

By Sheree Fitch, from *If You Could Wear
my Sneakers*, Doubleday, 1997.