

The Centipede

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Her serpentine body curls round them all,
Hinging where her chitinous plates connect.
Legs—rows upon rows of spike-legs that crawl—
Probe the squirming bunch; her fangs redirect.
But she doesn't wind here round ill-starred prey;
It's about her own children that she's curled.
Their soft pallid bodies, hatched just today,
Are exposed to the hardness of the world.
So mother then interposes her steel
Between them and it—a living rampart—
Shielding them with what stirs the fear we feel,
Treasuring them in her tubular heart.

Thus she reveals a truth, this venomous arthropod:
Nature's filled with violence and love, just like nature's God.