



## Apex Predator

*I follow the rhythms of nature. As the rivers flow, I flow. As the clouds form, I form. As the leaves obtain nourishment from the sun, I am nourished from the sun. I am nature.*

*When and only when a mortal is one with nature can they become nature in the secretive forest. Hidden in the summer woods near the West Outlet of the Kennebec River a black bear feeds insatiably on wild raspberries. From within 75 feet and for over an hour I watch the bear meticulously grasp each ripened berry with its nimble lips. When it approaches within 30 feet, it stops briefly to stare at me as if to say "hello." I am nature.*

*I continue to experience a profound and frightening sadness with each visit to the forest. It gives me no rest. These days in the woods are the happiest and saddest days of my life. The bear will likely be killed by man within a few days.*

*If a bear weeps in the forest, do you hear it? How does one know if a bear is weeping? Do you see tears flowing from the bear? Do you hear the bear wailing? How do you know when a bear is weeping? What sense do you use to discern a weeping bear? You know when a bear weeps because your heart tells you so. The black bears of the great north woods of Maine are sobbing.*

*When the bears, and the forest and its denizens, raise their voices in tears, have you the ears to listen?*

*I am nature.*

*Thomas Mark Szelog*

