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Clouds Small in Contrast

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“Say . . .”
“No really, he has to be like that.”
“If you say so honey.”
It was beginning to be fun now.
In less than fifteen minutes he had nearly a complete ark. It wasn’t any good, however. He began to think too much. Why do I always have to do that, he thought.
He made a journey about the place and talked with several of them. Most of them told jokes and many were funny. He was becoming relaxed now, and didn’t notice it anymore.
He told a few of his own jokes and seemed to be accepted into the group. This pleased him for a while but then he began to think again. Someone said, “Aw, don’t pay no attention to hippo, he never says very much.” Then he was right back where he started. Of course not, he thought, they never do.
“Oh don’t be an ass!” one of them said.
“But, he has to!” he cried. He was standing up now and his face was white. “He has to . . . don’t you see?”
Then he noticed that he was nearly whinnying. He became horribly frightened and fled from the place . . . but it was in a gallop.
Over in a corner a woman whispered to her companion, “Are you a man or a mouse?”

Clouds Small in Contrast . . .

Morning and one in a large bed,
Lying there still; beautiful and legendary.
A kiss, she awakes, a dream is dead,
Not her’s — mine instead.
I feel the chills — a moment more to stay
While she wills others to begin.

. . . Gordon Hope Jr.