

MARK FARRELL

To the Beavers of Tierra Del Fuego

"Brought in 1947 to create a hunting and fur trade, the original 25 pairs have now multiplied to 50,000, devastating trees.

Last November, environmental authorities spent \$48,000 on Canadian beaver traps, passing them out to local hunters and ranchers."

International Herald Tribune,

Monday, 11 October 1999

Seems you can't win, eh?
Doing what you were supposed to do ...
Not your fault, etc., etc ...
Best to forget it—and just keep doing what
you do best:

Balling.
Breeding.
Building dams ...

But learn their habits, too.
Avoid the traps they set—
and finally,
when they come as one—guns and gasoline ...

Abandon your homes.

Go underground.
(Literally and figuratively.)
Dig long connecting tunnels:
Huge complexes of them. (Mazes.)
Learn to eat bugs. (The gritty and oozing worms.)
Grow big and heavy and strong.

Keep balling.
Keep breeding.

And then,

 when you're good and ready:
awkwardly, at first, sure—a stumble or two—blinking unused eyes,
but other senses having taken over: Smell! (on the wind)
—the sour stink of human sweat (and *that?*) the first hint of fear:
 because,

turning, twisting to the water:
The THUNDER of your tails! Slamming.
Slapping.
Shattering the silence in the air ...

Yeah.
Take back what's yours.
Kick ass.

 The comforting feel of powerful paws on the earth,
flexing ready and sharpened claws:
(and your jaws): Nibbling. Gnawing.
 Gnashing ... effortlessly, mercilessly—the countless bloodied
trunks and stumps
littered
in your wrathful wake.