



Taxonomic Poetry: Those Marvelous Metazoans

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Porifera are full of holes.
This group includes the sponges.
They're filter-feeders through and through
Some grow to be humongous!

Cnidaria are jellyfish,
Anemones and corals.
Their tentacles have stinging cells
On colonies or singles.

Planaria are flatworms,
Platyhelminthes, to be sure
As scavengers they crawl around
With muscle cells galore!

The roundworms are ubiquitous
Nematodes by name.
Some of them are parasites
And that's their claim to fame.

Mollusks are a sturdy group.
Most of them have shells,
Except the wily octopus
Who hides in caves quite well.

Segmented worms are Annelids,
More complex than the others,
With hydrostatic skeletons
And coeloms like their mothers

Arthropods have jointed legs
In every shape and size
And exoskeletons they molt
As a regular exercise.

Echinoderms are all marine,
Sea urchins and sea stars.
Their radial symmetry stands right out
On seaweed or sand bars.

Chordates usually have backbones,
But a few of them do not.
Sea squirts and the lancelet
Are examples of that sort.

Invertebrates are a splendid group
Filling niches far and wide
From ocean floor to mountain top
Over all the countryside.

Now we're on to vertebrates
With their backbones strong.
The Agnatha, the jawless fish,
Were first to come along.

Next we have Chondrichthyes
With sharks and skates and rays.
These fish are fast, so well-equipped,
And splendid in their ways.

Bony fish are Osteichthyes,
First with solid bone.
Swim bladders filled with gases light
So they can float alone.

Amphibians and Reptilians
Were the first to live on land.
Some reptiles, like the turtles,
Sought the ocean, not the sand.

Birds and mammals were the first
To counteract the weather
With built-in thermostats they found
The ocean was not better!

We tend to think we human beings
Are really just the best;
But we're the same, though not in name,
No different from the rest!

