

The Wrestlers

by Adam Palumbo

Grappling—
eloquence in torsion, a language
of bodies and mastered agility.
Two opponents fighting like lithe
jungle cats for dominance, like
generals plotting their attacks,
their feints—this is no playtime thing.

Theirs' is a transcendent labor.
Pulling and pressuring position,
trapping and taking advantage.
Reduced to proficient instinct
and aggression, with the arena
laid bare beneath their feet,
centered in a ring of pure struggle.

They have practiced and drilled
their strength of body and will.
Bottled rage, uncorked here,
if only here. Spurred, fueled
by the admixture of dedication,
tortured repetition, and vaunted ego,
they fight.

