

Leashes

I have watched you
For almost 3 years now
Circling the park
Long bright orange leash
On your old yellow lab
Who walks slowly
And everyday
Without fail
Steps
Onto this leash
Always the left leg
Tangled, stumbling
You stop to admonish him
Time after time
I want to yell out my window
Tell you
Hold the damn leash higher
You're the fool who lets it drag
But I don't
Because I also
See your odd gait
The slight tilt to your head
The gaze that's focusing
Always off your shoulder
Maybe a mental health issue
Maybe a stroke, long ago
Stepping daily
On your own leash

Desert Dusk

Tires grind
On the sparse gravel
Of the dusty road
The windshield
So brown and hazy
I turn on the wipers
Clearing arcs
Needing to see
The deep ruts
That the tires
Involuntarily
Drop into
Tumbleweeds roll silently
Across the open land
It is quiet here
Eons old
The huge red mesas
Loom above me
At 4 pm
The sun
Already blocked
By these giants
Standing sentinel
I should stop soon
Start setting up
My tent
I know better
Than to wait
Until dark

The temperatures
Will drop quickly
Once the night moves in
The dark world
So different
From this hot, dusty bright one
The scratching, urgent footsteps
Of the desert's inhabitants
Will seem loud
In the stillness
The long, keening howl
Of the coyotes
Will soon begin
Rolling through the night
As the moon
Illuminates and shadows
This quiet land
I am alone here
I am not lonely
I feel the pulse
Of this desert
That needs no one
That will last
Long after I
Become a part of this dust
A land proud and strong
It's elusive beauty
Not shared
With just anyone
I am one
Of the very lucky

My Day is Filled with Thoughts of You

Yes I sort of hate you
I'm sorry but it's true
I used to sort of love you
But those damn days are through
Now my greatest pleasure
Comes not from being wise
Instead I've found I treasure
Just planning your demise
Will it be an icy road?
A dangling rock above?
Maybe just a poison toad?
An unexpected shove?
I could pray for a tornado
That only hits your house
I like to see me as the cat
And you the little mouse
Don't lose sleep while waiting
It may not be today
Just know that I'm debating
What game we'd like to play
I told you that I like to win
You thought that I was kidding
I need to find the perfect end
I just don't know what's fitting
Why do you say I'm crazy
That really is not nice
I'm just a girl with feelings
Don't make me tell you twice

Racetrack

In the grandstand
The crowd hums, excited, tense
Lives and dreams and futures
Riding on the back of each racehorse
Held in the reins
Of the jockey's weathered hands
The sun beats down on the oval track
Where the winner and the 'also rans'
Will go head to head, neck and neck
Weeks, months, years of training
The instinct to win, at any cost
Instilled in these weary competitors,
Necessary in these glorious athletes
Both large and small
The pounding of hooves
Begins again and again
With the shrill, demanding ring
Of the starting bell
The clanging release of the metal gate
Where horses stand trembling, eyes wide and rolling
White lather on their necks, before they've even run
Riders hunched down, eyes forward, reins gripped
Preparing for the G-force propulsion of this magnificent beast
Dirt clods will lift from the earth, shooting backwards
Into the faces of the slower horses, their riders
Goggles for the jockey, blinders for the steed
Precious little protection against this rugged life
Careers made and broken
By the luck of many draws

The starting position of the horse
The horseshoe that doesn't fit just right
The knee that will blow on the final turn
A rider who hasn't eaten in days
Trying to 'make the weight'
Each and every race impacting lives forever
A move to another town, another racetrack
Where maybe the fates will be kinder
A marriage tired of the moving
Someone stays behind this time, never to catch up
On the good days, money flows like water
Sometimes making life better, often not
The rider may choose to leave this world
Search for something different
But how to find a match for the skills
Of fearlessness, endurance, strength
That have been refined these many years
And what of the crowds, the cheers and the glory
Sometimes far between, but addictive like no other drug
Wading through the tickets of the losers
A child tugs on the hand
Of his mother
A jockey's wife
So tired of this circus, this frightening life
Watching quietly from the rail
As the next set of warriors are led into the paddock
Twenty minutes to make your wager