

Living Things





Autumn

Dismal, bare

Falling, denuding, fading

Chill, quietness, warmth, busyness

Budding, blooming, coloring

Bright, luxuriant

Spring*~ Anh Phuong Nguyen*

Ponies

Next to the other show horses
the little pony seemed like a toy,
a toy of steel with a soul
of gold upon her saddle,
as the little girl, with glasses
jumped over fences, cantered
or moved to a trot
as upon the most gracious champion
in a rhythmic motion
of one single body and soul.

The pony's white and gray colors
matched the girl's freckles and blouse
and the two gold and silver heads
arched together to reach
the other side of a rainbow
of clean sunshine and smiles
that were showing only
for the two of them
in every jump.

The little pony at times,
for his own self or that of the little girl,
refused to jump here or trot there
and then both heads bowed low
raising their eyes from between
red faces with tears to show
frustration, love, or both.
The mutual bond was so tight
one soul alone held them together.

The bond was one day brutally broken.
An accident pinned the pony
to the ground, broke her spine
and two bodies separated

while one soul only
held the pain.

The little girl watched
her soul break in two,
unaware that her pain
provided the soul
to carry the pony to heaven
where she could trot
freely over the meadows with no falls
and no jumps she could refuse.

She had now become immortal
with the soul made for her
by the little girl
who gave her pony, in love,
her eternal pain.

The soul of a pony
is the love
of a little girl.

~ Cynthia Harrison

Morning

As the sun came up
over the ice-covered lake,
the pink and blue hues
my eyes gave a second take.

The air felt a chill
which wakes up the skin.
It also starts the mind
thinking: let the new day begin.

A prayer softly spoken to go
up to the sky.
Faith is knowing the
answers will multiply.

The beautiful sun is now up,
another day to begin.
More adventure awaits
Another goal to win.

~ Marjie Mustard

Winter

Cold, wet

Raining, sleet, snowing

Poinsettias, evergreens, roses, tulips

Fishing, boating, swimming

Warm, sunny

Summer*~ Art Massengill*

Untouched Island

Calm, clear, quiet, and unruffled.
Small sounds of water sprinkling
Down rocks, or falling off leaves
Hitting puddles
Birds flying in the crisp air of
The ocean.
Waves bouncing off the white
Sand that goes back into
Endless times.
The way the wind blows through
The palm trees and through
Flowers which give a fragrance
That is unforgettable.
The sound of a waterfall
Dropping into clear,
Blue water.
Animals that can
Enjoy a habitat without loss.
The beauty that this
Island has is untouched!

~ Heather Tilley

Butterfly

Colorful, busy

Flying, sucking, producing

Always looking for flowers

Bee*~ Anh Phuong Nguyen*

Winter's Fun

The air is cold, the sky is gray
The ground is white with snow.
The boys and girls are out at play
With their sleds in tow.

They're bundled up to keep them warm
From their heads to toes.
Huffing, puffing, up the hill
To the top they go.

Down the hill away we go
Runners gliding through the snow.
Racing down at break neck speed
Wind in faces, "Faster," they plead.

Humpity, bumpity, downward they go
As they hit bottom, they're tossed into the snow.
Rolling and laughing as they come to a stop
Up again, up again! Back to the top.

~ Carol Rudder

Our Unusual Household and Its Inhabitants

My family and I are not a usual family. We love animals, but not just ordinary animals. We have exotic animals that people no longer want and therefore, give to us.

Rocky, our iguana, is about 2 ½ years old. He's a beautiful bright green and tan-to-brown, thick striped. He was abused by his previous owner. Curt, my boyfriend, saw him in a pet store, but no one wanted him, so Curt bought him for my birthday. We had to do a lot of training and earn Rocky's trust. After he was healed physically, we were able to get him used to us to where we could pet and hold him. Now he roams the house, free and happy.

He likes to eat green, leafy vegetables and cat food, although iguanas don't usually eat cat food.

Spike is a Cayman, which is an aggressive alligator. This is Curt's pet. We got him from a friend's brother. Spike was no longer wanted, for whatever reason. He likes to eat live prey, like medium-sized rats. He is about 3 ½ to 4 feet long and weighs about 20-30 pounds. I, myself, do not handle Spike unless he has his muzzle on.

One of our other pets is a bird, a cockatiel named Smoky. We got him from a man who had to go on a permanent vacation. Smoky is a beautiful smoke grey and about seven years old. He usually flies around the living room and loves to land on your shoulder. If you're eating, watch out, here comes Smoky. He loves to eat. Most birds only eat seed and bread, but not Smoky. He will eat anything, like steak, mashed potatoes, and whatever we have for dinner. He'll sit up on his cage, make a beautiful spread of his wings, and say, "Pretty, pretty bird." Smoky will give you kisses, play with your hair, and he loves earrings. But you'd better watch out if you're a guy – he pulls your facial hair.

We recently lost our boa constrictor named Sly. We fed him a small mouse and he got blood poisoning from it.

We also have not-so-exotic animals – our fish and cats. Our fish don't have names. Our cats' names are Whitey

and Hash. Bet you can't guess why we call them that. Whitey is a pure white cat. He was our very first animal. We saw an ad in the newspaper for a little lost kitten who had wandered to an old lady's house, but she didn't want him. Hash is a pure black kitten we found outside starving. Hash is our unusual cat because he has no tail.

I know most people think we're crazy for having all these animals, but it really shows our children about love, responsibility, and to be unafraid of different kinds of animals.

~ Angela Murphy

The Little Lame Donkey

Once there was a little lame donkey. He lived by himself because no one wanted him. He was lame in one leg, but this didn't bother the little donkey at all. He was always thankful to have three good legs. His fourth leg was weak and he couldn't put much weight on it.

It seemed nobody wanted a lame donkey, so he decided to live by himself. He had every right to be bitter and sad, but he was always happy.

Each morning he awakened with a happy face. Come rain or shine, he would get up and find himself some grain or grass to eat. But before he ate he always bowed his head and gave thanks to God for giving him food and strength to take care of himself.

The little donkey would go for long, slow walks every day. At the beginning, his walks were slow and short. But with a lot of effort and a strong mind he became able to walk all the way to town and back home.

He would say God gave me three good legs for walking and a good strong mind for thinking, so I have no time to feel sorry for myself. I can find a dry place to live and gather in all my food for winter. With God's beauty all around me, what more would I need?

One day the snow had been falling all morning, and in the afternoon the little lame donkey went for his walk. He was walking slowly, admiring the falling snow, and thinking this was one of the most special times of the year. It was Christmas Eve!

Then the little donkey saw something moving in the snow. He didn't get too close at first. He saw it was an old man who couldn't get up by himself. The old man was freezing and his body was shaking. He opened his eyes and looked at the little lame donkey as if to say, "Help me please." The little donkey used his clear mind for thinking. He knew the old man needed to be warm before he could move him.

The little donkey lay down beside the old man to get him warm with the heat from his body. He then licked the old man's hands and face to get the circulation going.

Soon the old man started moving around. He took his neck scarf and tied one end to one of the little donkey's good legs and the other end to the blanket he was lying on. The little lame donkey pulled the old man very slowly until he got to the little donkey's house. There he found enough blankets to cover the old man so he would be warm.

The sun began to shine, and the snow started melting. The little donkey had never seen the sun shine so pretty and warm on Christmas Eve. The old man took cookies, candy, and fruit from his coat pockets to give to the little donkey.

It was a mystery to the little donkey how the old man had fresh fruit in December, but he asked no questions. He just bowed his head, thanked God, and wished the old man a Merry Christmas.

~ Etta Lorene Bailey