

CATS AND DOGS

Some people think my life is pathetic
and perhaps they are right.

I hang up the phone
after being cut off
by an old friend and I am alone
again in my house on Cape Cod
in early June.

Not completely alone – I have my
sixteen-year-old black lab, who
needs to be fed rice and chicken broth
with a little bit of wet dog food.

The house smells like pee,
which smells a little bit like popcorn –
salty and sweet at the same time.

I turn on the television for news and weather,
heat two pots of water – one to replenish
his supply of rice and one for my pasta.

The packaged Caesar salad with pre-washed
lettuce, creamy dressing, garlic croutons,
and parmesan cheese tastes surprisingly good.

There's a violin concerto playing on the radio
as the last light from a cloudy day slowly dims
between bright green leaves outside the windows.

Later, after taking my dog outside to pee
with no success as he seems to have stopped
peeing outside in the evenings,

I settle into bed with my poetry books.

I am grateful for the silence and opportunity
to read again Hayden Carruth's "Birthday Cake."
I have folded down the corner to that page.

He is grateful at age 70
to be in love with a woman
age 42 and to know that she
loves him.

At age 56, I am in love
with a man age 39,

but I don't lie in bed
with him the way Hayden
Carruth lies in bed with her.

I don't even speak to him
and I have never heard him
say my name.

Some people think that I am gay,
because I have lived alone for so long.

Certainly, I have always been ambivalent
about how females are supposed to act.

I know that because of my gender
and age, unlike Hayden Carruth,
I cannot assume that young man
loves me.

But I can love him,
as long as it stays hidden
like a wild cat in the night.

Suddenly, my sleeping dog
moves his feet and makes a noise
dreaming his doggy dreams.

WE WERE ONCE DOLPHINS

We were once dolphins swimming
in the same pod – so playful and free!

I was your wife and I died young,
so this is your chance to love me
as an older woman.

You were my son.
I was your mother.
I rejoice at seeing you
so successful, happy, and loved
by so many gorgeous women!

We were sisters. We were brothers.
We were sister and brother,
girlfriend and boyfriend,
girlfriends and boyfriends,

just friends.

We were lovers.

I was your old dog.
You were my young puppy.

You were rich.
I was poor.

One of us was white,
the other dark
like a Moor.

We were so ecstatic
to see each other again
in this lifetime, that we almost
couldn't contain our laughter –
as if we might break loose
from the pod and leap
into the air making sounds
of ridiculous glee! Making sounds
in the air – eee! eee!