

CATS & DOGS

Content warning: violence related to animals, mention of blood

Sometimes, lying is the right thing. For example, my dad learns piano on a keyboard we all pretend is acoustic stand-up & I tell him it's high quality. For example, he co-parents a dog & I don't tell him I hate his useless dog.

But the lullaby he plays begins like this: two tigers, two tigers jumping up and down

even if it's raining outside. Especially if it's gray outside & it is now

so they shouldn't be giddy anymore, knowing that fact. They'd be drenched in muck from cars zooming past

like two jaywalking quadruped-estrians. But in this state that's legal. I guess we're all cats on some level though it's easier to make that comparison for tigers & legal or not

I think I should be hoping they're still jumping in puddles & growling at each other's wet fur

feral kittens bathing.

My dad's dog is upstairs with the zoomies. Tigers & goldendoodles, both sometimes mistaken for as lions & therefore not that different from each other

more like sister-cousins

one with teeth to tear deer meat from deer bone & the other with chops to lick while watching its owner, waiting. For what.

Man's best friend. Yeah right. I know

it was a long time ago, sixty days. The breach of man-dog contract. Not my hand

but might as well have been. What even is the right thing? What does fatal determinism even mean, does that mean I couldn't have fed him chocolate so the incident would be over before the bite even happened because the universe chose not to let me?

It would've never happened. I could've made up some illness & drove him to the doctor & gotten a ticket for having no license so I never would've made it to the doctor. I could've acted

back when the thunderstorms tore apart my skull & I thought being a child meant being fed from the same bucket as a dog. I couldn't see. I was thinking how could the dog ever deserve

this much. Then I let him lick my hand & I gave him cubes of watermelon & I became another mindless follower another man

& I stopped hating, that quickly. I snuck him treats & braided the soft hair around his ears but never too much to force anything in place. Then he went to the dentist

got his teeth brushed & needed an anesthetic for it. Then the side effects painted him into a tiger & I guess tigers ache for human meat too in addition to deer. Symptoms: restlessness, unresolved anger, confusion

I was confused too, I guess. I thought being nice was the answer. Now money for tetanus shots wired to the poor woman in my dad's house, the dog's second co-parent.

She stood hunched over the sink, nerves intact but neural pathways shaking. *I've raised dogs for 17 years and none of them have ever bitten me before.*

I could've done something horrible, ended the bite before it happened

a year ago when I couldn't even stand sitting in the same car.

But between iron deficiency & iron resilience I chose irony.

We couldn't have prevented this, I said.

The blood runs down the street

the dog stays inside