

Creature Lover

the drycleaner
can't afford
air conditioning

it reads
96.5 degrees

I wish I hadn't looked
because now it *feels* 96.5 degrees

a woman walks in
with a little dog on her arm,
how did this dog get
so unlucky?

there is neck brace
around the dog's neck

"His anal gland burst." the woman says

"His what?" I ask

"His anal glad, or anal *sac*,
I forget which."

"*Anal sac.*" I say aloud to myself

"Poor baby, I found him in a pool of blood."
she continues

and then feels like
going into great detail
about her dog's
burst anal sac

"It wasn't inexpensive to fix,
either! But they're worth it,
they're like our children."

she leans down and kisses it
on the snout

the little dog
reaches out its tongue
and kisses back-

a mad woman off the street
comes in shouting
about the power of Jesus Christ

"I am the Archangel!" she says
"You need the fear of God put into you!"

she wears a black bandana around her head

"I'm going to let you live, but remember I'm a Hell's Angel!"

I agree to everything she says,
trying to ease her out of the store
ready to plunge a pair of scissors into her jugular
if need be

you must never underestimate
the unpredictability of
a crazy person-

where do these people come from?
certainly not from the
same place as me ,
couldn't be

I am nothing like
them

they are odd creatures
that must be watched
from afar

they even *look* odd,
walking along on two
legs

arms hanging loosely

swollen elbows
and sunken in eyes

oversized heads
bobbing back and forth
as they step

like some strange hybrid bird
that's been skinned

ugly creatures
when you really *look*
at them

but then
I contradict myself
because
the right kind of woman
can take the wind
out of me
the same way a punch
to the gut can

their curves,
their legs,
Jesus god
their legs

real beauty

I suppose
it makes me
a creature lover

for out of every million *people*
there is one that
champions my heart

and they alone
keep the whole damn species
from falling from
grace