

Blackfish

Black as night and white as snow.
You thought you could tame a
creature big enough to dwarf
your puny boats?

Even humans would not be
so foolish, so you stole me
away when I was young.

Did you enjoy it?
The thrill of the hunt as my
family swam for their lives?

Half of them swimming off
to try distract you while the
mothers and their calves ran
desperately with nets at
their backs.

Were you proud of what you
did when you finally captured
one of the calves and dragged
the net in front of their mother?

Were you boast about how
skilled you were when you
hauled us into the air? Dragging
us out of our home and leaving
us at your mercy?

Did you shed any tears as
you watched my mother chasing
after your boat with her screams
piercing the air?

STOP. COME BACK.
STOP. COME BACK.

Did you hear the pain in her voice
or did you only see a dumb
animal whose loss would soon
be forgotten?

Did your tiny ears hear the change
in pitch as her cries turned from
pleas for you to stop into goodbyes

as she fell back and let the boat
pull away for good?

GOODBYE. SAD.
GOODBYE. SAD.

Trapped in a cage with walls that
bounced back my booming echos
like sharks teeth ripping into the
back of my skull.

Fed fish that were froze and lifeless.
Imprisoned with strangers whose
teeth tore me to pieces each and every
night. Tiny pools barely big enough
for us to turn around in.

No escape from the anger they vented
on me. Anger at the ones who held them
there. Who tore them away from their
families. Who forced them to jump and
play for the amusement of others.

You sent me away to another home.
You thought it would be better for me.
But a cage is still a cage.

And a prison is still a prison.

More strangers. More hate.
More anger. More packed stands.
More jumping. More fancy tricks
day after day.

You drag me from my mother.
Separate me from my family.
Throw me in with violent strangers.
Force me to perform for dead fish
and a rub on the head.

Then you turn around and ask
me for my love?

Only humans could be so arrogant
and so foolish.

How can a prisoner ever come
to love their jailer?

I tolerate your affections because
there is no one else.

I perform your tricks because I
have nothing else to occupy
my time.

I eat your dead fish that taste
like rot in my mouth because
I would starve otherwise.

But love?
Forgiveness?

You may have forgotten what
your kind did to me, but I
never will.

You strip me of my pride
and then expect me not to
get angry. Frustrated.
Psychotic.

How can you expect
someone to be normal
after leaving them trapped
in a cage for their entire lives?

--Written April 12th, 2014