

# And the Horses Welcomed Me

Rose Krueger

I.

My duty was complete.

My “Bonus Baby” was grown and starting adult adventures.

It would be just the cat and me.

I searched for a new home, alone, secretly afraid.

II.

Thanksgiving. Sometimes daughter and I did not wish to feast before God.

So, we jumped in the car and drove 600 miles.

We had to wait for our room. Daughter drove. We took the turnoff to the lake, down a dirt rut road worn into grass. We parked and walked toward a man who was putting his dogs into his Explorer.

The bachelor band came out of the scrub trees and we had nowhere to go without getting in their way.

In the way of adolescent males everywhere and across species, they got destructive in their curiosity.

The dogs were barking hysterically from inside their vehicle. The horses were eating the car.

III.

One was pulling the weather stripping with his teeth, another trying to fit his mouth around the mirror. Another kicked the tire while his buddies ran their teeth over the hood.

The smallest, maybe he got kicked out a season early along with his older brother, looked at us with childlike curiosity.

One step, then another. Bold, but cautious he came. Clearly to me.

Having nowhere to retreat, I simply stood. My hands were held open-palmed, low, not threatening. Welcoming.

He slowly moved toward me. His soft nostrils blowing gently on my palms. A little snuffling. He backed away but did not leave. He liked me.

IV.

I decided that day to live in Carson City.

The horses had welcomed me.