

Habit Trail

Habit is so comfortable
I have everything I need here
Food, exercise, entertainment
My keepers are very conscientious
They sift my sawdust, pour new pellets, refresh the water
But best of all are the beaming, smiling children

Habit is so seductive
They put me in a ball that rolls around the playroom when I run
The cheering, jeering children chase me
And I return exhausted
To the routine
That lures me back to safety

Habit is such a prison
I long to get away from the bloated, leering faces of the children
The food is stale, the sawdust sour, the water rancid
The tubes in the habit trail only take me back to,
Never away from, the fetid air

One day my caretakers are careless
They set me on the carpet to be watched by the children
While they clean my cage
Over the patio threshold, I see a forest of green grass
Swept lightly by the breeze

In the split second where
Survival instinct wins the battle over inertia
I make a run for it