**Soccer Ball**

The rough sand of your paws tremble against my own soft soil skin

Claws lose grip and frailly slip past me, without the warmth of fur

They say that dogs dream about their owners, and I wish I could know what your dreams about me were.

If you would’ve understood how many times I read the rainbow bridge with clouded eyes and that same twenty year old hand grazed over a glossy pamphlet to feel its cold print.

I think about you carrying an entire soccer ball between your incisors, and trotting around like a show pony.

I’d chase you and laugh

When my strides were equal length to your own,

When my giggle matched your high pitched bark.

And I knew we could be best friends

Your legs now tremble when I walk you to the mailbox, parallel to my own mother’s limbs.

And blonde turns to grey

And blonde turns to grey

I feel your rigid sides like a map of your life alongside me

Milky eyes, and what I still know is a smile, as you wiggle upon jagged hips

And I move out

And you can’t hear

And I become a bag of rocks

And the pink soccer ball is deflated in the back of our garage.