Sugarcane

When my mother was younger
Living in Hawaii
The half brother she met
When he showed up
(surprise)
At the front door of their
Air Force base house
Bought her a horse

She must have been
About eight years old
But was eager enough
To make all of the arrangements
For a great big creature
Who’s blood is made of wind and earth
To live and chew oats, biding his time until
Tender young hands came with sugarcane

All her father had to do was
Pick him up
From the dock at Pearl Harbor
But her father loved oats too,
And malt (what horse?)
Barley and hops
Too well he loved them
His blood made of darker stuff

On the mainland
Short, but oh so long
Years later
He remembered a thing of beauty
And went to live with her
Leaving (finally)
Second wife and two growing
Reminders of their union

Gleaning then that marriage was
An unimportant contract
My mother failed to tell her father
About hers
Until the birth of (sweet little bud)
My brother
But who can blame anyone
For forgetting such things

I must have been
Around eight years old
When my mother’s father came to visit
Upon invitation (surprise)
Arriving early he was not granted admittance
By our black lab
So he sat docked at the curb
Waiting for us to pick him up

I thought it quite sad
An old man
Forced to sit (so lonely)  
Waiting to be retrieved  
By soft young hands with sugarcane  
Led past the white toothed guard  
But sometimes dogs and other beasts know the blood  
Of others better than little girls do