

Three Poems · *Pat Mangan*

THE HARNESS

All right mister she says all buckled
her good boy good dog in the doggie harness
she had made for him real leather
with the brass rivets see it goes around him
across his shoulders under the tummy
but not too tight because he is walking
just everywhere getting into things
and to which now she fastens a length of rope
and then to the clothesline All right mister
going for a walk and he loves it
gets right up under the fat clouds
the green trees everything's waiting
as she gives him a kiss a slight push
for direction down the line
the garage where the birds are nesting
and turns away and never looks back
never hears the rope hissing above his head
or the short squeals the ecstatic panting
all morning throwing himself into play

THE BEAR

Who would burn a bear with cigarettes
and yet they did over and over
at the city park under the cottonwoods
brown bear with much of its fur missing
next to the bandstand it didn't know to go
to the center of its cage it kept pacing
the way they do rubbing itself
against the bars shuffle turn
shuffle back the small flames I imagined