

powerful animals

she can be like a dangerous wild animal
sometimes when threatened she fights
she does not run or walk away because
these options are not available to her
in those very rare moments of high stress
like a cat, swung by the tail, cornered
she bites and scratches and spits and kicks
not because she wants to hurt
but because we are wired that way
to fight, or flee or freeze, without choice

she was broken once in the system
taking two years to physically recover
a few seconds of trauma recurring
many times mentally at night
so now in her darkest fear
she fights back with all her strength
because her so called carers wounded her
and she hasn't forgotten the pain
or the abuse inflicted on her first
she may be a pet, but she's not a pushover

Jo Beth Gray