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Donald

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DONALD

By Kathy Belletire

Large, brown, quiet; the horse's name is Bear.
He chews hay and waits for Donald.
A tall young man pushes the wheelchair for his father.
"BEAR!" Donald calls to the horse in his garbled voice.
He raises his hand to greet his friends.
He is wheeled up the ramp, Bear lead to position.
Donald struggles to stand, to escape the pull of the chair.
His world teetering, Donald shuffles two steps forward.
Helping hands grip his arms.
His foot is put in the stirrup.
All lift, all pull, all hold, all steady him.
As the man's weight descends onto the horse's back,
Bear stands still, patient, ready, trusted.
A single toss of his head as he accepts the burden.
Knees rigid, hips locked, ankles stiff, awkwardly shifting to find a balance in a
body slow to respond,
Donald straddles the horse.
His fingers hold tight to the leather strap.
His feet push hard into the irons.
He is ready.
Bear's hoofs lift, land, lift, land,
his broad brown back sways gently.
One leader, two side walkers, horse and rider
walk slowly around the arena.
"BEAR!... THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!"
He calls to all, to each of us.
Donald, once a surgeon now shows us who speak,
walk and move without effort
the meaning of humility.