TIGER TAMER

MICHAEL G. HICKEY

Sara whispers into the soft ear hairs
of seven Bengal tigers
purring like NASCAR engines
in a ton-and-a-half heap of fur.
They love the way
she uses her whip
& especially the way she does not.

In another life,
they might be wandering dry stream beds
chasing down an antelope
crumpling a water buffalo
or hiding from poachers intent
on grinding their balls
into the dust of an ancient aphrodisiac.

But in this life
they live for Sara
five-foot, ten-inch, blonde & beautiful Sara
who leaves their balls intact & the cats
don't mind standing on a chair for her
or dancing a little jig
or even playing dead.

MICHAEL G. HICKEY received a BA in creative writing from the University of Arizona, 1987, and an MFA from the University of Washington, 1992. In 2009, he was inaugurated as Seattle's eighth *Poet Populist.* Hickey has been a college writing professor for over thirty years and lives in Seattle with his fiancée and two sons. He has written two novels, *Counterclockwise*, and *Tell Me What You Want,* as well as three books of poetry, *A Dress Walked by with a Woman Inside, In Defense of Eve* and his newest title, *How to Talk to Girls (& other urban myths)*. In his spare time he volunteers as a creative writing instructor for children at bereavement camps, juvenile offenders at youth detention, and adult inmates in federal penitentiaries.