Old Shipping Pens
By Amy Olsen

The old shipping pen stands
Drifted in with snow
Sun beating down
Wood dark brown
Some black
Railroad ties hold the smaller posts
They’ve weathered many storms
Pounding rain, beating hail
Black bodies slammed into the wood at one point
Rough horseback gentleman used to open the gates
Sort apart the wanted from the leaving
Loaded the trailers
There weren’t aspens in the pen then
Their white bark a contrast to the dead ties
The white snow offers silence, solace
A contrast to the old days
The bawling pairs, whistling men, barking dogs
That, undoubtedly made a living in the pen
And made a life on the land
The snow kills the life
The pen remembers the flesh and the emptiness.