Helpless

by Emily Sparkles

She stiffens and blusters and roars
Not like a storm.
Not like a lion.
Like a badger, caught in the steel jaws of a trap.

She defends her young, as any mama would.
She defends her
but her defense is a road map to the situation.
Not even a solid justification.
A litany of reasons why.

But she can't see it.

It's easier to latch on to me with her teeth and her claws.

The badger would be saying,
"Look. You're human, and so was the inventor of this steel trap we're in, my young and I. We're innocent, you know, we're stressed, you know. I led her into this trap, I devoted time to this trap, but how was I to know it was a trap? You are the same species as the person who laid it, so I don't appreciate you telling my young to get out of this trap."

And like any caring passerby who got caught trying to help,
got caught and maimed in the process,
I try to reason.

I explain calmly expectations of the society,
the one she sought out for help,
not just me,
and how together we can achieve freedom.
I compliment the tenacity of her young.

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You always compliment their young.

But the badger turns away,
convinced as all badgers are,
that chewing her own leg
and complaining about the pain
is the answer.