

# At the city pound

By Vincent O'Sullivan

I'm in charge of a cage. I know those that won't.  
I don't mean can't. Just *won't*. There's a roster  
for Tuesdays, Fridays. Dogs to die.

The disconsolate, the abandoned, those with recurrent  
symptoms, the incorrigible mutt — oh, a dozen  
choices by way of reasons. Even so,

some *won't*. Won't play along once their number's  
up. The "rainbow bridge" in the offing  
as the posher clinics put it, a pig's ear

as a final treat, a venison chew, the profession  
behaving beautifully at a time like this.  
Still, those that won't. Won't go nicely, I mean,

with a gaze to melt, a last slobbed lick.  
Those with a soul's defiance, though embarrassment  
in the lunchroom should you come at that one!

Even after the bag is zipped, you feel it:  
*We're real at the end as you are, buster. We sniff  
the wind. What say if we say it together? Won't.*

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