

it travels in its own caravan from show to show in its own cage  
with a wet and dirty floor

that is washed down with a hose after each stop.

it is sent out night after night to the performance  
and everybody gasps at the use of the whip and  
how the animal cannot decide whether to obey or to consume.

even when it is well executed

lust is not a pretty picture of manners and etiquette.

it does not matter whether it is the brightest and glittering

sequined tights riding atop

the plumed horse circling in the center ring

or is led back to be encaged for

the road travel for the next stop

by the old rigger with gin breath

who likes to rattle the bars with a crooked stick.

under the big top.

wf.h.

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