

## A PUP

We got a puppy, against my stern paternal and spousal advice and counsel, but no one listens to me much anyway, and no one listened to me at *all* when I muttered dark phrases like *hidden costs* and *sudden puddles*, and now, a month after we got the pup, she is technically still on probation, and dire lectures are delivered at dinner about Sharing the Load or Else, but the cold fact of the matter is that she is here to stay, and the chances of her being exiled back to the pup factory are nil, and she knew this, I am sure, because every time I corner her in the hallway, away from her many small agents and apologists, and make her Sit, and stare into her mad roiling eyes, and give her a terse lecture about her behavior being *totally* unacceptable, she smirks and yawns and pretends to be fascinated by insects drowsing by, and she drums her snowshoe feet on the floor impatiently, and as soon as I finish my speech she thunders away like a driverless car and soon there is a crash or roar or sudden puddle.

Yet there are things I admire about her: the way she vacuums ants, and her general headlong exuberance, and the way she chases balls with no regard whatsoever for her personal safety, and the way she loses her footing in the dining room and goes sliding headlong into the wall where she piles up like a race car but bounces up grinning, and the way she snores like a horse, and the way she is terrified of wrens, and the way she falls asleep instantly when classical musical drones out of the radio, and the way her ears pay attention when you ask her a question, and the way she sits patiently by the children's door at dawn waiting for her rumpled gods to emerge.

There are many things about her that make me snarl and moan, primarily the eating of caftans, chairs, cleats, coins, crayons, cushions, mail, marbles, mice, sandals, shampoo, shawls, sneakers, soap, toothpaste, and some other things I don't remember and some I don't *want* to remember, but I have had worse roommates over the years, and louder and ruder ones, with more peculiar diets, and weirder obsessions and misdemeanors, and anyway not one of my roommates over the years was anywhere near as good at sucking up ants.

I consider what is coolest about the pup, and I conclude it is the way she waits by the children's doors in the morning. She pads from the kitchen, where she has been eating the newspaper and worrying my shoes, down the hallway, and there in the warm dark she pitches camp, staring at the knobs of the doors, for she believes with a faith unshakable that soon a hole in the world will open and out will come that which she loves with all her hungry heart.

I watch this every morning and go away edified, graced, washed by joy.

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*Brian Doyle, Editor*

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