

## Dog Gone It

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Everywhere I go these days, people ask “Where are the dogs?” I didn’t realize how much a part of community they are. It warms me to my toes to hear people wonder where they are. At first I thought it was just a jesture, but when people inquire about my pooches, I know they really wonder: who took the dogs out? When I say, “It’s winter. Willie shivers, he’s getting old,” everyone understands.

Tonight, as I write, I look onto my bed, to see Willie and Toodles laying gratefully with my electric blanket over their little bodies with their heads sticking out, just like humans. It’s an amazing feeling. They love unconditionally. But, do we?

I am honored to be the guardian of these darling dogs and they’re lucky because at my house there’s no big foot stepping on them. The worlds in a mess now and we’re all in the dog house. Having a home is a problem for a lot of us. Humans wage war a lot more than animals do. “Dog eat dog” is really a phrase that fits better for people -mean spirited competition, stomping on each other. Humans are the real creatures of habit. In fact, they’re the only species that kills for play and sport.

Dogs love to walk and socialize. When they’re scared, they cower, claw or bark, just like humans or put their tails between their legs but, that’s a later tail to tell. Nowadays dogs are not treated well, not many houses that rent to them. What’s up with that?

Because animals are voiceless, they sometimes bark up the wrong tree, but so do we. Sometimes they nip at heels, but a little patient training will heal that. We should be grateful - they are shorter than us, so all I see is heels, when sometimes, in my opinion, it’s the guardians (owners) who are heels. It’s a dog’s life.

Dogs don’t have toilets, so we have to pick up after them. That’s not a lot to ask really, with all the devotion they give, unconditionally. They adore the dog park...it’s our sort of cocktail party for them. It’s really humans that fail them when a dog’s doo doo gets brushed to the side of the road, but then we blame them. Why do people pick on dogs instead of picking up after them?

Oh, I know nobody’s perfect, but that’s not my point. If we say we’re “humane” then why not take care of the critters too ?

Maybe it’s because the human species is so frustrated and angry that they are abusive towards more helpless creatures. This isn’t easy to talk about, but it has to be said: Our pets try so hard to please and to learn .They are born innocent. Its people I’m concerned about. You can teach an old dog new tricks. But, what about people? Why can’t humans create a human race that takes care of our community of creatures ?

I love this poem written by Kathy Flood, from: “Animal Rights Online:”

*A dog sits waiting in the cold autumn sun,  
Too faithful to leave, too frightened to run.  
He's been here for days now, with nothing to do,  
But sit by the road, waiting for you.  
He can't understand why you left him that day.  
He thought you and he were stopping to play.  
He's sure you'll be back, and that's why he stays.  
How long will he suffer? How many more days?  
His legs have grown weak; his throat's parched and dry,  
He's sick now from hunger and falls, with a sigh.  
He lays down his head and closes his eyes,  
I wish you could see how a waiting dog dies.*

Please open your eyes. Do something to make the animal world a safer place. Donate to your local shelter, report a negligent “owner”, adopt if you can be responsible and care, walk them, volunteer, talk to landlords about offering them a home, report negligence. Please do something.

Dog gone it. Dogs have feelings too.