

Eunoia Review

beautiful thinking

Dog

Posted on [February 5, 2017](#) by [perfectsublimemasters](#)

I am in the basement of our townhouse seated on the couch facing Joseph, my husband, who is seated in his desk chair at the computer where he composes music, but he is not composing right now. We're talking casually, and in some offhanded way he mentions a dog that he has never spoken about before, which apparently, from what he has just said, used to live in the townhouse, too, before I arrived.

“What happened to the dog?” I say.

He looks at me uncomfortably like he doesn't want to tell. He looks ashamed, and I am now uncomfortable as well, waiting to hear.

“When I left Ellen,” his third ex-wife, “I took one of the dogs so the children would have a pet at my place, too” he says. “But Kelly,” his ex-girlfriend who lived in the townhouse with him before we met, “was allergic to dogs. She took allergy meds but said the meds weren't working for her, so I took the dog to a facility.

“I know they would have put it to sleep,” he tells me with a look of sorrow. But it is a strange look of sorrow, like he feels sad for himself, not the dog.

With his words, my feelings for him are marred. It is a swift unsettling change.

“I told the children that the dog died,” he says, “so don't tell them what happened.” I think about how much one of his children is enamored with dogs and how this stepchild of mine lights up at the subject of them and must have loved that dog.

“Okay,” I say and say nothing more.

“What are you thinking?” he asks, concerned by my silence. There is a pleading look in his eyes, like a child fearing disapproval.

I am thinking that what he did scares me, not only because he seemed to have no attachment to a dog which lived with him and which his child likely loved but also because the extremeness of what he did was unmotivated in his story. But I don't say that. Instead I ask him about Kelly; I give him an excuse. He has implied in the past that Kelly was off-balance and mean to him though I never came to that conclusion myself from his stories.

“Did you feel...” I hesitate, “mentally abused by Kelly?”

“Maybe,” he says, and we never speak of the dog again. I want to love him in the same way I did only moments ago, before he told me.

Pamela Woolford writes fiction, memoir, and literary journalism. She has authored more than 100 pieces published in *Poets & Writers Magazine*, the fiction anthology *Amazing Graces* (Paycock Press, 2012), and extensively in *The Baltimore Sun*, among other publications. “Dog” is an excerpt from her current project, a multidiscipline memoir called *Meditations on a Marriage*, which is a book (represented by the Carol Mann Agency) with an accompanying short film, a film about a dance about a book about emotional abuse. Woolford was a 2016 Tucson Festival of Books Literary Awards finalist and longlisted for the 2016 Fish Publishing Short Memoir Contest for excerpts from the project. She is a Maryland State Arts Council Individual Artist Award winner for fiction, a recipient of a citation from the Maryland House of Delegates for her journalism, and was a 2014 Rick DeMarinis Short Story Contest semifinalist at *Cutthroat, A Journal of the Arts*. Two of her short stories are nominated for the 2017 Pushcart Prize, one by novelist and Pushcart Prize editor Mark Wisniewski. More about her work can be found at: <https://about.me/pamelawoolford>.

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1 Response to *Dog*

[Susan W Goldstein](#) says:

February 5, 2017 at 7:59 pm

That tells so much about the husband. I would have trouble with this new knowledge, too. How this man does what is expedient, at such a high price to a beloved member of the family.

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