

The Name on her Collar was Ticker

By Helena Trifillis

I sat by the river
Writing poetry
About to leave
It's 3:50 and I have yoga at 4:15
She came to me like she knew me
Ball in mouth
Dropped ball
And gazed at me expectantly
It began to drizzle
The other people started to leave
She was nobody's dog
And she chose me
I threw, she jumped
We played
I looked in her eyes and was hit
With a wave of understanding
Somewhere, deep in there
I knew this dog
Somehow, in some life
She was my dog
Today I will skip restorative yoga
It's 4:13 anyway, much too late
Was she lost?
Or a spirit I was meant to find
The name on her collar was Ticker
Hmm Ticker, like the ol' heart

And then I swear the clock wound back
It was 4:13 only moments ago and now it's 3:26
What? I could have sworn I had already missed yoga
Is this a sign I'm supposed to go?
Maybe I'll have another spiritual download like I had last time
I let the time be
I played with Ticker
Loving her more and more
She was funny
Almost human
The way she looked at me
And then the second 4:00 rolled around
Ok this time I will leave don't want to
Miss the chance again
I held ball in hand
Watching Ticker treading water, waiting
“Come on Ticker, come up and say goodbye, I've got somewhere to be!”
She just stared at me
I held the ball captive, waving
Luring her to shore
She didn't budge
I dropped the ball at my feet and went to gather my things
This was a cue she understood
She bounded out of the water and up the trail
As if guiding me back to my car
I was delighted to have met such a familiar creature
Be it divine intention or happy coincidence
I drove away to my next escapade
When I arrived

I looked at the time
It's 5:05, the time shifted back!
I've missed yoga and missed...
Missed the chance to play with Ticker again
Then the lesson crept in
I should have stayed
And spent the lasting moments with an old soul I once knew
Now she's gone and it's too late
Oh I should have stayed and played all night
I'll go back
I turned the car back on
Maybe time will roll back
I drove back
But I knew

You're an old river dog like me
An old heart
All you wanted to do was play
And my human mind
Always worrying about time
I think I misread the sign
It wasn't a second chance to rush away
It was an invitation to stay and play
Thank you for showing me the way,
Again,

Old heart