



Gone Girl.

There's a big chunk of me missing now. I had to put Maggie down after almost twelve years. She was the best dog I have ever had and I've almost never been without one. I have buried my other dogs here in the yard but, not her. She has one more adventure.

To the world you might be one person, but to one person you might be the world.

Love and compassion have a huge price at times. Watching the slow demise of a dog you have rescued and who came to love you unconditionally may be the worst of them.

She was as perky as ever even as the cancer in her lymph glands continued its march to the inevitable. The glands in her



throat swelled daily, it seemed, but she showed very few signs of discomfort. This cancer of hers seemed relatively benevolent, if there is such a thing. In all of her years with me, the joy of just being alive has always been the essence of her and that spirit has never wavered, other than occasionally, for a few seconds, whenever it was necessary to chastise her for some transgression for which she, and then I, were both soon forgiven.

She has been following me everywhere lately. Not conspicuously, but enough for me to know that she



feared something, like when she knew a storm was coming. Something was palpable to her but she couldn't see it or smell it. She didn't understand but she knew. It was almost as if she didn't want me to know she was sick. Always near by, I still catch myself looking for her before I move my chair from the computer. I miss her terribly

I have never experienced so much heart in such a small package. When we were out in the bottoms, I was always a little nervous because she was fearless. She terrorized any dog who got near me, even Buddy, who has a couple of scars on his flanks and a notch in his ear from his experience with her.

She would flirt with me every morning, even her last one. She would jump in bed in the morning and proceed to root me out. Once I was up, she would roll over on her back in front of me, yipping and talking. Utterly shameless.

We took the long slow way to the vet. She came prancing out of the house when I called her, just like she did when we were going to the bottoms, so we did. She ran around as best she could, got her marking done and jumped back into the car with no help from me.

I stroked her muzzle and looked in her eyes until her heart stopped, then I couldn't look anymore. I had never seen those eyes without joy in them.

Except when a storm was upon us. Storms always terrified her, I suspect because she had to weather so many after she had been dumped. Her condition when I found her spoke volumes about

what she must have endured. She was never the picture of health but, if she suffered she didn't show it. I did the best I could for her. She deserved that at the very least. She was a great dog. A great friend.

She always hated birds, especially vultures. I know that Black vultures will sometimes kill animals by first blinding them and she may have experienced an attack by them when she was a pup. In any case, she never met a bird she didn't chase.





Her job as a dog was to chase things and she was very adept at it. I once saw her run over a rabbit trying to catch it. She also chased her share of skunks, and unfortunately, caught up with a couple.

She was without a doubt, a gift. I had no idea that I could love anything that much so, there's hope for me yet.

I had her cremated. So when that first Blue Norther comes roaring in, I'll take her ashes up the hill above the ditch where she came up to me, years ago, as a very cut, bruised and damaged young dog. I'll send her forth with the wind and she will forever be a part of every breath I take.

God speed, Sweet One. I will miss you always.

I'll miss her nudging to be petted, laughing at her showing her teeth and gums anytime another dog got near you, and that deep throat growl straight from the pits of hell to warn off the intruder who vied for your affections. She turned Buster's (Sharlene's huge dog) bowels to water, and could never understand why Marlee (Sharlene's deaf dog) wasn't scared off by her best warning. Everybody else learned to ignore her, but that never stopped her from telling them that you were her dad, and wouldn't brook any competition. She was a one of a kind, sweet, loyal girl, and I know she's running in sweet, green meadows.

Rest easy, Maggs.

Sharlene Andries