



# “Musing from the Hill” by Susan Crossett

as seen on the *Dunkirk Observer* on Fridays  
and the *Jamestown Post-Journal* on Saturdays



## Anticipating a Heroic Homecoming

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Writing these Musings in advance for eleven years has shown me the wisdom of penning my words early to avoid any of the last-minute deadline panic I still remember from college years.

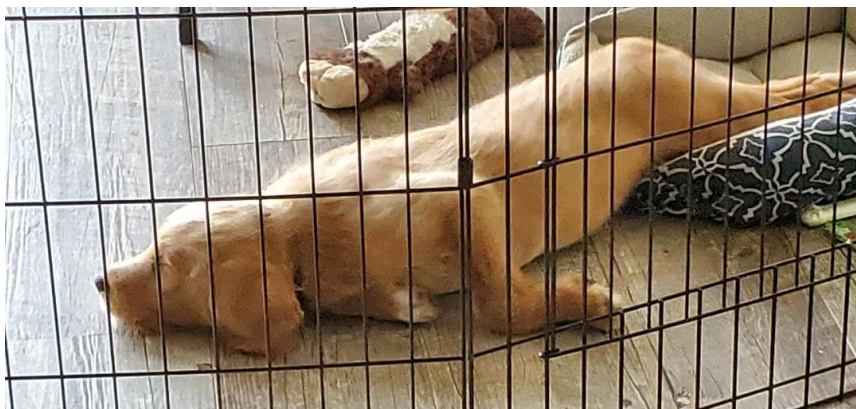
By the time you are reading this, Hero should be happily settled in here with me.

I had not seen Anne in a couple of years and hoped her visit will be long. Sadly, while able to extend her stay by one day, come early Sunday morning, she had to load up her two dogs and head back home. I think she estimates at least a nine-hour drive each way with stops to accommodate the canines.

The moment will be sudden though the wait seems close to eternity. All at once I will be ALONE WITH MY DOG. I've “known” Hero for eight weeks since he was delivered to Anne's on May 28th. She has been fabulous about sharing photos and news and, hardly coincidental, taking very good care of my pup though I'm realizing more and more what a disruption he has caused to her once-placid life.



Recently Anne shared a photograph of her living room. What was the dining room is now filled with what she calls a playpen, a movable enclosure of metal sides. She tells me Hero is getting strong enough to push it a bit. (There really isn't that much space to move it into.) Hero willingly goes in there to rest, has water and food dishes, lots of toys with more play things scattered about the room.



Her home is small. Mine isn't – but that doesn't mean it will be easy to find room for the playpen. She guesses he'll be outgrowing the need for it about the time he gets here – only Hero is happy in it when left alone. I believe I can free my schedule for an entire “Hero Week” but then it's back to the usual errands and appointments.

Naively (VERY) I think Hero will

arrive, hop into my arms and that will be that. I tend to overlook my uprooting him from the home he's known for the past two months.

Anne's convinced the little baby had nightmares after reaching her. He'd scream in his sleep, piddling at the same time. Being aware of the trauma such a change again could make will help me. This is a pup who wants little but loving. I have plenty just waiting.

I hadn't realized until she mentioned it the other morning that my Hero has never been fully integrated into her life – intentionally. I know Hero stays behind when she takes her two on long hikes into the mountains. He'd be too small to keep up and is blissfully unaware of the porcupines, bears and other dangers she may encounter daily.

An old hand at fostering, Anne believes her dogs understand that Number #3 is only a boarder. She assures me Hero doesn't understand why he's loved but not integrated. Not family. Hers eat separately and go on trips to see friends while Hero is fed in his playpen and left at home. Her two have different rules and commands as she's trying to train Hero for me. (That also means Hero isn't getting a nightly toothbrushing since she rightly presumes, I wouldn't do that.) Hero's playtime is with a smaller beagle, Beau, who visits frequently from next door.

But Hero's coming home! Her two jump quickly into her backseat and are seasoned travelers. All those trips into the mountains (they aren't very far away) plus at least one to here. She has a small car and needs the back for luggage and supplies. Will that “playpen” even fit? It may be a crowded journey though, from all she's said, no dog could be more accommodating.

Then again, at six weeks (when his name was still Barkley), Hero had to be transported to an airplane in Texas, probably to another to make the final portion into New Jersey and then an even longer drive to bring him to her home. Hero's “chauffeur” even phoned a picture along the way of him holding the shaking puppy. Will all that return to frighten him even more? He will be with “people” he knows: Anne, Maverick and Hawkeye.

I know she has concerns which are understandable. Then again, dogs are on the move a lot. Molly (at an advanced age) was driven from Rochester (agreed not Texas – or even Vermont) to Buffalo, changed to be brought to Dunkirk and ultimately to my home. Set loose, she did start down the driveway, was quickly “captured” and never roamed again. Buddy, before Molly, had to be found at the top of the hill about three homes away and then – just once – dug himself under the deck and needed human help to get out.

I hope I've learned my lesson.

I want this to be forever.

Written July 7, 2021

