



“Musing from the Hill” by Susan Crossett

as seen on the *Dunkirk Observer* on Fridays
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Goodbye, Old Girl

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I have always liked to write about Molly.

She has fans who only contact me when a column about her appears. Besides that, it's she who fills my days with joy and causes unexpected outbursts of laughter.

Writing about her is obviously overdue but, come on, she and I are just like the rest of you – basically stuck indoors with, for most of us, not a heck of a lot going on.

People have responded to this isolation in different ways. I was happy to hear from relatives at Christmastime but ultimately cut the call short after a full hour (no exaggeration here) when she dug in to tell me of a tree that had fallen last summer in the yard next to their house. Then another typed two single-spaced pages to tell me of a course he had taken in grad school – over fifty years ago. People, talk to each other!

I feel doubly-blessed. I am very happy being alone – and writing serves my purpose of talking as well. I think of one woman who calls apparently just to “touch base.” I do plead guilty to being rather short-tempered with the interruption which, invariably, comes in the middle of a football game or vintage opera.

Molly (she was to be the subject, remember?) doesn't mind at all. She does mind my occasional grouching because she has taken it on her own to invariably position her stretched-out body in front of whatever door I next need to pass through. I am no longer easily fleet of foot to hop her elongated body so getting around at times can be a trial.



At first, I was touched as I grew more aware that Molly was choosing to station herself closer to me. Was age making her more fearsome or was she just noticing some of my more sterling qualities? Henry inevitably stayed close by my feet. Molly, arriving late to my life, has always been more aloof, mealtime being an overwhelming exception. I once called her the perfect house-guest. She remains exactly that. (You should see the cat when I'm dishing up her kibble! She purrs loudly – the only time – and rubs against my cheek. I knew a little girl like that. Such “love” indeed! I'm still wary because that affection has been known to bite in nothing flat.) Lately, in fact, Molly has opted to inhale (or so it seems) her

bowl of dog food before even going out first thing in the morning. I don't question bathroom habits as long as they work. And Gloria too always heads for the great outdoors. Well-trained pets.



Molly was given a very soft flannel blanket as a belated Christmas gift. I considered it a wasted – though very nice – effort but spread it over her bed near the television. I can't get her off it during the games! If I straighten it, she'll muss it back up the minute I'm not looking.

As now – as always, Molly's camped out in the hall. I'll have to step over her to walk out of the den or go anywhere beyond. It's hardly new to me and I honestly don't know why she selected that one place to be her special spot. No other dog has lain there. There's no vantage point – she can't see what's going on

in any other room. (Though, as mealtime approaches, I see she's moved – just enough to keep an eye on me at a distance). She knows it's close to dinnertime – for her. I prefer to wait a bit but she'll be on her feet the second I move.

Checking in on Molly – I swear she hasn't aged a bit. Of course, we're together constantly so it may be difficult to judge but her health seems good (for Molly who arrived with so many problems but somehow ignores them all) and, when I begin to place her pill and supplements in her dinner dish, she hops about as enthusiastically as would any pup. If anything, she has improved getting down and back up the steps.



Oh, sure, there are times when I catch her looking quizzically at me: You still here?

Happily, we both are.

Or were.

Molly died February sixth, aged 14 ¾.

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