

A Homeless Dog
copyright Barbara Zach-Miller

On long and lonely wanderings through this town of mine
I once heard tales of miracles so rare, so truly fine
They caught my heart in tendrils of hope so hard to bear
I hung my head in sadness, and recognised despair

A dark and stormy night it was, a night to flee and fast
A shelter find away from here, far from gale and blast
While there I sat in shivers from cold and rain so cruel
I saw approach another dog, a pup, a seeming jewel!

With agile step, and manner pert, with coat still shimmering through the dirt
"Hey there, Old Dog, you look a sight! The night is foul, but take not fright
Lie next to me, I bring you cheer to keep you warm throughout the storm"
The truest tale, he promised me, to tell with dog solemnity

So drawing close, we fur to fur, watched thunder, lightening through a blur
Of wind and rain so hard and sharp, they lashed their way through blackest dark
"Now, listen well and don't despond, for here on Earth there is a bond
which runs soul-deep and is that fond that nothing, be it death beyond
is strong enough to break the tie twixt man and dog, I do not lie"

"In verity, believe me, do, this love is ever-lasting true
It is the reason why, say I, that dogs like us will always try
To be the best friend man can have, to prove constant, loyal at command
Shake not your head in disbelief, I know first-paw of what I speak
A family with hearth and home once took me in ne'er more to roam
Each one they were my star on high, my everything, my matchless pride
And for their sakes I would have died"

What is this love? How can it be?
I can not understand for the life of me

"I shall explain, is his reply, so hush to learn about this tie
When cherished dogs live free of want, of torment and necessity
When best of all we dogs may show our family fidelity"

Tell me more, I beg you please
Else I will think you just a tease!

"Then imagine this to dry that tear
Some kindly words to allay your fear, and a snug embrace so close, so dear
Or when child comes near, a tiny mite, who hugs you round with smile so bright
To whisper secrets in your ear, the sweetest that dog will ever hear
And, too, a place of warmth to dream, a bowl of food and water clean
Yes! Life shared with man, so safe, secure, with promises that will endure
When we are loved for ourselves alone, with now and then a meaty bone!"

He then sank his head upon my shoulder
And strange enough the night grew colder

"All this was mine not long ago, but gone and lost to my great woe
There came a time they went away, left me alone, and to this day
Bereft, perplexed, a homeless stray
But I shall find then, come what will
For I am sure they love me still
No rest for me, no easy sleep for I have memories to keep"

He shook himself and droplets fell
"Goodbye, my Friend, I wish you well!"

With big dog grin and wag of tail off he sped down to the vale
In blithe pursuit to find what he
So sorely sought and thought to be
A love that lasts eternally

His parting bark rings in my ear
"I'll find them yet, to you I vow. They're missing me, they'll want me now"

The next day dawned, grey, drear and chill
And now alone I felt quite ill
An ache so dull, a heart so sore
I wanted no, not evermore
To hear about this human love
That I was never worthy of

I felt so downcast and forlorn
I wished that I had not been born

Pain holds me fast from ear to tail
It is an effort not to wail when
Foot or stick meets with my hide
Scars left, scars right all down my side
And how it hurts to hear the worst
"You filthy beast! You are a curse!"

In truth this life no mercy holds, no loving word
no pledge of care, no home for me, not anywhere

My time draws near, I know it well
It is Death's spell that I can smell
I choose a place 'neath leafy tree
To lay me down, wait patiently

I settle there, resigned to fate
The sun is high, it is not late
So rest, my body, tired and spent
And end a hurt that will not mend

I drift on breezes cool and fair that ruffle through my tattered hair
My heart it slows to beat in time as far-off bells the hour chime
I sense below the ground is deep
At last, at last a peaceful sleep

But hark! I hear my name no human voice has spoken
In tones as light as birdsong to me it will betoken
An endless love, for me, once cast-away
On this my last, my first, my dying day

*Come home, my little one, run free where fields are green
Where there is no want, no fear, nor sufferings so keen
Your loneliness is over now, for your worth is gold to me
And I shall never leave your side for all eternity*

Mine, the miracle divine!