

## GEOFFREY HARESNAPE

## Put Down—Three Poems

## 1. One Man to His Dog

We never got to mow a meadow,  
 Though there was always need to cut the lawn.  
 Devotedly you probed the tangled hedge,  
 Sniffing at old turds, anointing a stone,  
 While I was busy with the engine's roar  
 To lop the heads off grassy myrmidons.

You took no notice of my Hectoring ways,  
 Seemed not see my ponderous to and fro;  
 Nor did the snakelike power-cord attract.  
 Yet when I called, you spoke back with your tail.  
 I feared a flung-out flint would make you bleed  
 But did not fear enough to stop the blade.

Throughout your prime you were my Ariel,  
 Stirring up sandstorms with committed paws  
 Or jumping up and up to snatch the rod  
 Extended by a crusty Prospero.  
 On walks your forward sallies and returns  
 Exceeded my staid distance sevenfold.

Time that attacks me slowly took you fast.  
 Repeated ear infections marred the ports  
 Beneath your earflaps that were fresh and arched  
 Although your pelt was dry and partly bald.  
 Two cataracts positioned in your eyes  
 Robbed your intentest gaze and made it dark.

Tired, and moth-eaten like an old kaross,  
 Your body still contained a busy brain.  
 You changed from voiced commands to those of hand;  
 Then—with the black-out—there was only touch.  
 You waited for the arms that lifted you  
 Into the haven of your much-nosed box.

Most recently you lost the skill to stand  
 And turned and turned within a sickly ring.  
 What fur that you had left was pale as ash.  
 I've brought you finally into the sun.  
 Your grave's already dug beneath the hedge  
 And I must post you—paws and all—to death.

*kaross*—a blanket made up from pieces of fur.

## 2. Interrogatory

*Oh, where did I go wrong my master?  
 Or in what way have I offended you?*

Though blind and deaf, I know your presence.  
 Your arms have lifted me, morning and night.

I'm warm in the sun upon this table.  
 Not guessing you've planned such bane for me.

I touch you with my moist, soft muzzle  
 But the vet's cold needle pricks to the bone.

With your caress my blood is coursing;  
 It carries your venom to all my cells.

When you once threw sticks, I ran to fetch them.  
 Now you are throwing my life away.

I slip from your hands beyond our friendship.  
 I thought you would keep me to the end.

I think that your beating heart has frozen;  
Like my once sweet flesh, it has turned to stone.

*Oh, where did I go wrong, my master?  
Or in what way have I offended you?*

### 3. The Dog God's Villenelle

Anubis mutters direly in his cell,  
Stirring the dust-motes with an angry flail:  
"Some human animal has not done well.

"I was attentive when my servant fell.  
I heard the rhythm of his breathing fail,"  
Anubis mutters direly in his cell.

He turns his fur-piled snout to smell  
The daubed-on alcohol that leaves a trail.  
"Some human animal has not done well.

"He authorized a lethal shot to quell  
The aged votary I now bewail,"  
Anubis mutters direly in his cell.

"Let him beware when all my minions yell,  
With fangs exposed to sever and impale.  
Some human animal has not done well.

"When he descends into this ragged hell  
His fond regrets will be of no avail,"  
Anubis mutters direly in his cell.  
"Some human animal has not done well."