

The Dog

by Daniel Harris

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They stood at the intersection waiting for the light to change so they could cross the highway.

Suddenly Kate started to run across the road against the light. He yelled for her to stop. There was a car without its lights on coming the other way.

There was a sickening crunch as her body was launched in the air. It bounced off the hood and slid over the top of the car. Her dog yelped a half dozen times and was silent. The car never stopped.

He ran across to where she lay. Blood was oozing from her head. Her left eyeball lay on the pavement. Her right leg lay like a broken stick crazily twisted under her body.

He stood in the road trying to stop the traffic. A second car swerved at the last minute to avoid her narrowly missing him. It ran over her left leg with a pop like stepping on a plastic bottle.

The light around the corner must have changed; a long line of cars was approaching. He grabbed her right arm and pulled her to the gravel on the shoulder.

It was twenty minutes before a police officer stopped. An hour before an ambulance took her to the hospital. The dog lay on the shoulder, road kill.

—Was she kin? asked the cop in a southern drawl.

—No, a neighbor. She has an ex-husband and two grown children.

—Do you know her name?

—Kate. I never knew her last name. We walked along the river each evening for the last month or so.

—We checked your name. Your sister reported you as a child molester.

—Kate was hardly a child. She is sixty at least.

—Sex offenders don't abide by age, son.
—I'm older than you officer. Please don't call me son.
—I can make it real tough for you, sonny. Keep your yap shut.
—My sister stole all my parent's money. To protect herself, she reported all her brothers as sex offenders.
—You Yankees think we don't know how sick you are. You think we're all sister-fuckers down here. Pod people. We'll show you what we do to molesters.
—What about Kate. Isn't that more important.
—She's dead boy.
He sat staring at the hospital floor. The cop pulled his arms around behind his back and cuffed him.
—Too bad about the dog. Those labs are great retrievers, the cop remarked as he walked the man to his prowler car.

