

No More Dogs

by David James

Highway 45N cost me four dogs when I was growing up.

Actually, having our backyard abut the highway was the real problem. It got to be where I was afraid to get too attached. We lost Nicky, Rusty, Spot and Tippy. After Tippy, I didn't want to have to be consoled on the highway right-of-way by our neighbor, Maggie Mae, anymore. It seemed my folks were always at work when the dogs were taken. It just hurt too much to have them get all crushed when they raced out through the azaleas and under the crepe myrtles and into the road, chasing something or being chased by who knows what.

When Tippy got hit, Dad said, "OK, that's it damn it, no more dogs!" My sisters and I knew it was the right thing for him to decide because they would always cry and we'd all mope around for days after each dog's demise. It seemed just after a new puppy grew old enough to insinuate himself into our family, a horn would blow, tires would screech and once again Nettie, our maid, would say, slowly nodding her old gray head, "Um, um 'nother dog done gone."

