

Garph and Sparky Barker

by Gabriel Orgrease

On morning resplendent in early spring light, in MG midget, Green Mallard in color, Associate Professor Daniel Godbutté played piobareachd bagpipes as he fumbled, steered and bellowed a bit over edge of single-malt sobriety. Drove in swerves through on narrow asphalt road near to the sanctuary inlet in Harwoody Park, a sheltered cove overhung of leafy willows where ducks and swans and geese congregated and people often visited to cast stale bread. He was a noisy contraption too quick too early in day and with small bump and flump flump with balding front tire he struck a mother duck. What luck?

With broken wing the injured bird fluttered and jerked. It put up a hell of a squawk only drowned out by the receding racket of amateur besotted bagpipes as vehicle and occupant progressed to southwest past raccoon, chipmunk and box turtle zoo towards lower decline of a small and relatively isolated boat launch ramp.

He was off for a bit of a sail.

Not to anticipate the body of a young woman, deceased, a suicide, a gorge jumper; bloated she floated nearby an empty foam cooler braced by a rather large clump of distressed cattail.

Mother duck, though once struck her chicks fluttered around behind in panic; little chirps they resembled loose leaves blown about by fickle wind. A witness took a picture.

Mothers of little children, children who grasped in their small swollen fists bits of sticky donuts, torn bagels and shards of day old bread, saw all this exasperation. Exactly excruciating. There were screams from the children that screamed. Insecure dogs barked. Children, afraid of dogs cried. There was uproar of melee. Children strained at their leashes to get away.

Garph with stalwart command arrived and grabbed up the mother duck. She did not reciprocate his embrace, "I will save the life of this mother duck. It will not go to waste. I am off to see a vegetarian!"

Little girls began to pucker up before the little boys. As did the white swan and black swan and goose and gander and trees with their crisp leaves, unobligated waves of Dead Lake white capped, and a candy wrapper blew past in lazy-ass arcs and a man who walked his Greyhound on cerise expanda-leash was bemused and the sun and moon and the stars waited their turn.

Garph smiled. He jumped into the cab of his pick-up truck with his dog Sparky Barker who barked amiably. They drove a way past a bramble-run hollow past several other hills past South Hill, past Dawes Hill, past Marble Hollow, past Connecticut Hill, past Bald Hill on to Infinity at Elston Hill Road.

In back yard at chop block Garph decapitated the mother duck with a rusty hatchet, plucked, prepared/cooked her as a sort of a mushy soup boiled with wild onions and 'taters then he ate it. Sparky was happy for boneless breast scraps and raw intestines, but no bones. Duck bones are not good for smart or neurotic dogs.

