

THE WRITERS' BEAT

EDITED BY ANNIE DAWID

"Queen of the Dogs" by Annie Dawid.

One year, a decade or more ago, I summured in Martin Canyon in Huérano County. There I read and wrote in a tiny one-room house not far from Martin Creek, to which I repaired every day to read, my feet dangling in the cool waters while the sun burned. I arrived with Ralph, my beloved Aussie/Border Collie/Bernese (not Burmese) Mountain Dog mix. For two weeks of that summer, I dogsat two canine friends, the pets of DU grad school mates, one living in Alamosa, the other in Denver.

Leia (as in Princess), was small and scrappy, with a ferocious bark. Rosie, the runt of her Rhodesian Ridgeback litter, was an oversized galumphing girl, cinnamon-colored and silly. Now I had a train of three on my walks to the creek, past the beaver pond, where we watched on full moons the master engineers at work. I marveled at their enormous dams, the way they did their work with purpose and without waste.

That summer of 1998 was my last as a freewheeling, childless writer. Planning to become pregnant that fall, I planned to take advantage of my ultimate solo vacation, soon to fall back into memory along with childhood and other eras. Yet, I became a maternal shepherdess to my flock of canines, Ralph, Leia and Rosie accompanying me everywhere, even within the confines of my tiny house of one room, from toilet to fridge to bed. Then another dog showed up, arriving unannounced one day with a sweet smile and beguiling eyes: I felt all the symptoms of being in love.

After local inquiries, I discovered

the still-nameless dog "belonged" to a couple who lived nearby but unseen, in a trailer beneath a multitude of cottonwoods, upstream. They did nothing for "their" dog except take nominal ownership; when I brought him over the following day to say he had been hanging around my house, they looked irritated. "Oh, there's Pete," they said, unhappily. I saw no dog bowl, no water vessel. The woman threw a pizza crust at him out the window. As I left, heavy-hearted, Pete followed me. "He's following me," I called back, and the man begrudgingly found a chain with which to tie Pete to a tree.

He was some kind of Australian cattle dog, part Kelpie, who had never lived inside a dwelling or been in a car; he had never been loved. I told myself sternly that I already had a dog, would soon have a child, and absolutely could not take Pete into my home. But he was already inside.

The couple didn't keep barking Pete on the chain for long; immediately, he returned. I started feeding him, knowing what I was doing without admitting it; I didn't want him to starve, after all. Upon entering the house for the first time, he peed on the wall but soon learned the difference between outside and inside.

Now my retinue contained four dogs, happily tripping behind me to my mornings at the Creek. A friend saw us walking down the road, and he named me, "Queen of the Dogs." I liked them all, but was happy when Rosie and Leia went home to their families, leaving me with beloved Ralph and the adoring Pete.

Summer's end approached. If I asked the couple to allow me to take Pete home to Oregon, they might say sure, go ahead. But some people who abuse their dogs – and sometimes children – feel a kind of ownership of that abused or neglected creature that precludes other adults' involvement. It would be as if I were implying with such a request: "You obviously don't know how to take care of Pete." This was manifestly true. "And I do," which was also true. Instead, I stole Pete, and drove my two boy dogs back to Oregon, Pete constantly trying to grab the windshield wipers from inside his perch on the passenger seat.

I wish I had a happy ending to supply. The following January, Pete bit me across the face one night because I picked him up, which he'd never liked, sending me to the emergency room for 15 stitches. Pregnant, I made sure not to take pain medication. It was my fault, I told myself: he warned me by growling, and I insisted on carrying him in my arms, as if he were the baby-to-be.

Others thought I should get rid of Pete then. I couldn't. But after my son was born, Pete decided, while we were out, to rip his infant-smelling quilt into a hundred pieces. That warning I listened to. It was one thing for me to have a few scars, another for a jealous, wild dog to rip into my helpless child. No shelter would take him when I told the truth about my 15 stitches, not even the no-kill ones. Inevitably, I held him in my arms while the very kind technician at the county shelter injected him with death. Crying and crying, I listened to her insist I was

doing the right thing, to her stories of dogs abandoned and tortured. Pete had experienced more than a year of love in his life, she said, a gift I had offered and fulfilled for as long as I possibly could. This year, he might have turned thirteen, when my son turns twelve.



Annie Dawid's third volume of fiction, **AND DARKNESS WAS UNDER HIS FEET: STORIES OF A FAMILY**, won the Litchfield Review Award for Short Fiction. It is available on amazon.com. Her story, "The Fox Breaks the Code," won the 2008 Short Short prize on www.literal-latte.com. A former professor of English at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, Annie is raising her son, Isaiah Max, and two dogs, Freddy and Fannie, in her cabin outside of Westcliffe at 9100 feet in the Wet Mountain Valley.

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Include name, address,
contact information & short
bio.

Colorado State Fair Opens in Pueblo CO on August 26th.

Pueblo, CO. The stage spotlights will be shining down on national superstars during the 2011 Colorado State Fair: "This year's lineup promises to entertain music fans of all genres.



Martina McBride

Martina McBride has won numerous awards for her vocals, Selena Gomez has created excitement from our younger fans, Los Lobos has a tremendous following, and the Beach Boys are timeless—just to name a few," said State Fair General Manager, Chris Wiseman.



Engelbert Humperdinck

His name comes from the 1911, century Austrian composer who wrote "Hansel & Gretel." His voice comes from heaven, and he has been a legend in the international music industry for the last forty plus years, with over 150 million records sold.

Engelbert Humperdinck has recorded everything from the most romantic ballads to the platinum-selling theme song "Lesbian Seagull" for the latest Beavis and Butthead movie. His remarkable voice and extraordinary talent has endeared him to millions of fans around the globe with the MTV generation having just "discovered" what a magnificent musician the rest of the world has celebrated for decades.



Los Lobos

Tickets to Selena Gomez & The Scene with guest star Allstar Weekend, to perform on September 3rd, have sold out. Tickets are still available to the long list of entertainment scheduled for the fair. Among these are: Stevie B, Debbie Deb & Color me Badd, Engelbert Humperdinck, The Beach Boys & Los Lobos.

A rare example of longevity in a volatile music world that stresses style over substance, Los Lobos' lineup has remained uninterrupted since 1984, when saxophonist/keyboardist Steve Berlin joined original members Pérez, Hidalgo, Rosas and Lozano, each of whom had

been there since the beginning in 1973.

"This is what happens when five guys create a magical sound, then stick together for 30 years to see how far it can take them," wrote Rolling Stone. Los Lobos is a band that continually redefines itself while never losing sight of where they came from



Mutton Bustin'

"The Colorado State Fair has been a part of Colorado's agricultural history for nearly 140 years; we are proud to honor that legacy by promoting youth and agriculture. Every year, the Colorado State Fair strives to be bigger and better. I invite everyone to join me in Pueblo this summer and you'll be amazed at the quality of attractions, concerts, food and rodeos," says Chris Wiseman, General Manager.

The carnival will feature more than 45 rides including the "Power Booster" - 131 feet high and flies more than 60MPH; the "Freak Out" - feel the 'G' forces as this 50-foot ride swings through the air; and, "Pole Position" - more than a roller coaster, the cars also spin.

With soft-serve ice cream, popcorn, carnival rides, a rodeo and music, the fair expects attendance to total nearly 500,000 people over the 10 days.

Art-Birds-Exhibits-Fairs-Festivals-Hikes-Music-Photography-Walks-Words-Theatre