

## Dog Songs

by Mary Oliver



### The Sweetness of Dogs

What do you say, Percy? I am thinking  
of sitting out on the sand to watch  
the moon rise. It's full tonight.

So we go

and the moon rises, so beautiful it  
makes me shudder, makes me  
think about

time and space, makes me take  
measure of myself: one iota  
pondering heaven. Thus we sit, myself

thinking how grateful I am for the moon's  
perfect beauty and also, oh! how rich  
it is to love the world. Percy, meanwhile,  
leans against me and gazes up  
into my face. As though I were just  
as wonderful  
as the perfect moon.

### Little Dog's Rhapsody in the Night

He puts his cheek against mine  
and makes small, expressive sounds.  
And when I'm awake, or awake enough

he turns upside down, his four paws  
in the air  
and his eyes dark and fervent.

"Tell me you love me," he says.

"Tell me again."

Could there be a sweeter arrangement?  
Over and over  
he gets to ask.  
I get to tell.

## Dog Songs

(continued)



### The Dog Has Run Off Again

and I should start shouting his name  
and clapping my hands,  
but it has been raining all night  
and the narrow creek has risen  
is a tawny turbulence is rushing along  
over the mossy stones  
is surging forward  
with a sweet loopy music  
and therefore I don't want to entangle it  
with my own voice  
calling summoning  
my little dog to hurry back  
look the sunlight and the shadows are  
chasing each other  
listen how the wind swirls and leaps and  
dives up and down  
who am I to summon his hard and  
happy body  
his four white feet that love to wheel  
and pedal  
through the dark leaves  
to come back to walk by my side, obedient.

### School

You're like a little wild thing  
that was never sent to school.  
Sit, I say, and you jump up.  
Come, I say, and you go galloping down the sand  
to the nearest dead fish  
with which you perfume your sweet neck.  
It is summer.  
How many summers does a little dog have?  
  
Run, run, Percy.  
This is our school.,