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Hesed: Sunday After Shabbat

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Hesed: Sunday After Shabbat

Mary Dengler

Four huge poodles hailed our entrance—service dogs,
Each trained to give assistance—hovering
Like aunties, as we walked inside, then circling us
Like specters of an ancient race, curious, tall
As castle seneschals, with oddly suited names—
Of Nutmeg, Sadie, Maggie, Shadow—
Eager, almost friendly, except Maggie, wary,
Moving backward, growling, warning us
That this was holy ground. But seemingly aware
A guest could be a god, Shadow, like a spirit,
floated toward my seated spouse to sniff and lick
His face and neck and hands. So hesed came
Through long, wet swoops, evoking steadiness
And strength enough to join our host.
This Jewish cantor—singer of the law—provided us
With Kosher meats and fruits and greens
And wine and various ice creams underneath
A stark Nevada sky. For us, he wove
Together Judaism, Hollywood, and musicals
In tapestries of words so mystical,
Like Shabbat at his Synagogue the night before,
I seemed a visitor at Sinai, waiting for the cloud
Or fiery pillar to appear. Through these we wove
Our little journey through the earth, all members
Of one family, creations of one hand, recipients
Of hesed now and in the Kingdom, still to come.