

Regarding the killing of Dewey

April 2, 2002

To Ed Smith:

It has been one week since you ran over my dog Dewey and filled my life with fear and sorrow. I want to tell you about the dog you so heartlessly killed, and what he meant to me.

Dewey came to me as a seven-week-old puppy right around this time two years ago. A neighbor brought him to me after someone else had dumped this tiny pup near his house. The neighbor knew I was going through a hard time dealing with the illness and impending death of my dear old Great Dane Jim-Bob, and thought a puppy might cheer me up. At first I didn't want to take him, for Bob was a total-care patient, and it had been a long time since I had had a puppy. I knew someone else would take the pup, because even at such a young age, it was apparent that he would be a beautiful dog. But when I thought about his future, possibly attached by a chain to a tiny doghouse to live his life outside, I knew I had to make room in my life and my heart for him, and so I said 'yes' when reason said 'no.'

From the start Dewey fit right in. I chose his name because it means 'Beloved One,' and that's what he was to me. When Jim-Bob died three weeks later with his huge head in my lap, it was Dewey who got me through the grief that otherwise would have been overwhelming. I was in a very fragile state at that time, because I had recently lost my son Joey in exactly the same way that you took Dewey from me — Joey was hit by a pick-up truck and killed on a road. The shock of finding Dewey where you left him in the ditch brought back all the horror I felt when I received the call in the middle of the night, telling me my precious 22-year-old son was dead.

Dewey filled my life with joy and laughter. You have filled my life with sorrow, and tears that fall every day. How could you so easily kill my best friend, and then let me find him dead in the ditch--the same ditch I see every time I pull out of my driveway? I'll never get the sight of his lifeless body lying there in the leaves out of my mind, just as I'll never get the sight of my son's body on the gurney at the mortuary out of my mind. I wonder what kind of a man would kill a person's dog and drive away without saying a word. What kind of an example are you setting for your son, who at such an early age seemed to me to be just as cold and callous as you are? The lessons you teach him now will impact him for a lifetime.

Dewey is the only dog of the many I have loved who died at an early age by another person's actions. Every other dog I've ever known has lived to be very old and died with me beside them. This is the way I had expected Dewey to die, not in a ditch, with a broken neck, when he was only two. You lied when you said he got up after you ran over him – dogs with broken necks don't get up – they die. We had just celebrated his second birthday on Valentine's Day. He should have had at least another ten years with me. You cut his happy life short and in doing so you profoundly affected me, and brought a sadness to my life that will follow me till I die. His absence fills every room of my home. There is nowhere I can go where Dewey has not gone with me. Dewey never hurt anybody. He was not on your property, chasing your cows, or terrorizing your family. You had no justification for killing him. You could have slowed down, you could have stopped, but you didn't. Dewey was a sweet and funny dog who was obsessed with his toys – he took a toy with him wherever he went. He wouldn't ride in the car until he had a toy to take. He slept with his toys. He knew how to pick up his toys and put them in a box, but he could never leave them all in there – he had to take one out and play with it. He slept on my bed from the first day I had him. Living with Dewey was like having a small and innocent child in the house, and he was a source of constant delight. Now that delight is gone from my life.

I know that Dewey is not the first dog you have killed. Mine is not the only heart you have broken. You broke the hearts of a mother and her children when you killed Mary Yount's white German Shepherd as she watched from her kitchen window. She told me you never slowed down, just as you told me you didn't slow down for Dewey. Do you kill dogs intentionally? I think you do. I think you should be ashamed of yourself for crushing the life out of innocent dogs, and inflicting merciless anguish on the people who love them. You have hurt not only Dewey and me, but also every person who knew Dewey and/or cares about me. I have no family living near me, and in a very real way, the animals I love and share my life with are my family.

I hope that you will think about what you have done and realize how cruel it was. I've lived here for nearly six years, and have never hit or killed any of the many dogs that are on the roads all the time, and I don't know anyone else who has either – except for you. It's not just luck or a mystery how other people avoid killing dogs – we are careful to avoid them. We look for them. We slow down for them. So should you.

I'll never get back what you took from me – Dewey's gone, and all that is left of him are happy memories and photos that make me cry. All I can hope for now is that Dewey will be your last victim – because killing dogs is wrong, it's just so wrong.



