

My Favorite Person In Windsor Gardens By Mary Lee Peterson

How do I choose my favorite person? There are so many people here who are amazing, interesting and I feel blessed to know. So here's my short list – and the first criteria to get on the short list is to love my dog, Lucy, or at the very least to tolerate her.

There's the woman across the street who always comes out to pet Lucy and to talk to me. She's a chemist by profession, has an active mind and shares what she's learning in her aviation class. Even though Lucy pooped in her house, she still speaks to us.

There's the sad woman who smokes with me outside on the bench. She lives in such fear and isolation that I feel compelled to be kind to her. She has occasionally appeared at my door to buy a cigarette when she's run out, and has left a book on my doorstep.

There's the woman who lost her dog in October. We would sit together outside in the summer and we've shared the heartbreak of losing a beloved pet.

There's the man next door who has the wryest sense of humor. One day when he was holding my door while I was screwing the lock back on, said with a straight face, "you know I'm missing the Bronco game". He's taken to dog-sitting Lucy when I'm gone and has finally figured out that she was finagling him to take her out for a walk when she really didn't need to go.

There's the man down the hall who has the kindest voice, and with whom I might have considered remarriage if I'd met him 30 years ago and he wasn't married. He's generous and open, and he even does laundry and cooks and cleans!

And the winner is – the woman who lives down the hall who snagged the man with the kind voice. She arrived on my doorstep the first day I moved in with a cupcake. She immediately fell in love with Lucy (smart woman). She made me feel so welcome in the building and introduced me to her daughters (of which there is a passel). She invited me to the knitting class. She went with me to Wal-Mart to buy a hallway stand and just shop. She hears me and tells me the truth. She's funny and girlish and wise. On the morning of my 18 month sobriety date, a note was slipped under my door. A note to Lucy which read: Dear Lucy, Today is a very special day for your mistress. It is her 18 month anniversary of sobriety. Be sure to give her a great big wet kiss and tell her you love her and admire her. This is a very hard journey and you two will reap the benefits of her journey for years together. Your neighbor and friend."