

Toward Morning
by Nancy Martz

Toward Morning I awake to notice she is absent behind the closed bedroom door. It is quite offensive and selfish of her, and I begin my series of yelps to call her out here to the living room where I have slept alone through the night, except for that dreadful cat and of course, the infantile Beowoof--the other Shih-Tzu and dim bulb (with whom I must share Nancy). Every few minutes, my sharp falsetto gives her notice that I am awake and require her presence.

I'm awake, I reason, and I prefer her to be awake, too, and in my line of eyesight, dim as it is these days with these damned cataracts we supposedly don't have money to fix until she sells the house. What the hell is she doing with her pension every month?

But I digress. I'd like her to come out from her bedroom and the hateful closed door so that I can smell her sitting on the couch reading her newspaper and drinking tea. It comforts me to have her near toward morning as I start my day. I find it easier to relax and catch a nap.

And she does respond, albeit tardily. I hear her knocking around in her bathroom, the water running and her closet door opening and closing; then she's finally in the living room, greeting the three of us with loving words, smiles and gentle strokes. We each get fed disgusting dog and cat food out of cans before she sits on the couch with her gourmet breakfast and tea and newspaper. Even though I wolf mine down and try to get Beowoof's and Chaco's too, her selfishness knows no bounds as I know she sees me sitting up and staring at her plate to little effect. All I can hope for is that she gets full before her plate is empty, and even then, I have to split whatever comes off it with Beowoof and even the rotten cat she calls "Chaco" but I call "Coyote Bait" in my prayers every night.

But I digress. As I nap at her feet, occasionally I will stick out a paw to make sure she's still on the couch. Should she stir, I instantly wake and sniff her feet to make sure she isn't putting on shoes. Shoes mean she's going out of the house altogether, not just room to room. Shoes mean either she will leave me here to seethe and perhaps pee a few drops by the door so that when she returns, her first step into the house will be memorable, and she will realize how her bad behavior is not tolerated....or shoes may mean she will take me with her as is warranted.

Either/or...it's her choice which is not what I prefer. I would prefer making the decisions and strongly feel this household would be better run were I given that responsibility. First I'd punch out Beowoof's cute under bite, and next I'd kick Coyote Bait's butt out the door. Certainly I'd like charge of the refrigerator.

Beowoof never gets her up in the morning, and of course Coyote Bait is totally useless in every respect. Beowoof just lies there wide awake, letting me do all the work to rouse her. He profits from my efforts.

What really rubs my fur the wrong way is that after I yelp repeatedly at her to get her up and out here, she sometimes heads for Beowoof first to give him a belly rub. As soon as he hears her footsteps, the little bugger rolls over on his back looking adorable and just begging her to approach, and she coos, baby talks, and smiles at him like he's a puppy instead of 10 years old and strokes his tummy while he shows his under bite and tiny pink tongue and looks dreamily into her eyes. I could throw up. She's even petted that damned cat before me, which drives me to the breaking point. I'd run away if I could see to get out the door by myself.

But I digress. I, myself, do not prefer belly rubs, although I've picked up the habit of rolling over just to draw her attention away from Beowoof. I prefer ear scratching and neck massage, and I prefer to be first. After all, if I weren't around to wake her toward morning, the rest of us wouldn't get any naps around here.