

Kleinberg

Dear Reader,

Thank you for taking the time to read My Fursister: An Ode to Moose. For the last twelve and a half years, Moose has played a large role in my life, and has been an integral member of the Kleinberg family. When I think back to my most cherished family memories of camping, hiking, holidays, and major life events, Moose has always been there. As of lately, Moose's health has been starting to go downhill, and I wanted to have my memories of Moose written on paper, so when the time comes to make the most difficult decision ever, I will have this to look back at when I am missing her the most.

For this piece, I have decided to write my Ode by using the following genres: a classified ad, narrative from my own point of view, a photograph, poetry, a narrative from Moose's point of view, and a list. The fonts change from genre to genre to more clearly show my audience when there is a change. The reason why I choose to start this piece with the classified ad is because that is how my family came to find our puppy, and ended the essay with a list to show to reader how priceless Moose is to my kin.

Enjoy!

Kate Kleinberg

## **My Fursister: An Ode to Moose**

### **FOR SALE**

Chocolate Lab Pups  
AKC, Excellent bloodlines, Parents onsite  
Shots, dewes, wormed, vet checked  
5M, \$200; 5F, \$250  
612-555-5555

My sisters and I excitedly jumped out of my parents' old red and white Suburban on a warm and sunny day in late August. The air conditioning wasn't working quite right, so beads of sweat were met by a welcoming light breeze when I followed my sisters outside. A nice, but tired looking lady greeted us at the top of the driveway and showed us to a small barn on the edge of the property. The grass was as green as a Crayola crayon, and I noticed a wooden swing swaying slightly from the branch of a massive willow. When we finally reached the barn, my senses were overwhelmed by the smells of warm straw and sweet puppy breath. Looking down, my gaze fell on the wriggling, squirming pile of chocolate fur and pink tongues. Somewhere in that scrum was the newest addition to our already large family, and I was overly excited to finally meet the face licking, four-legged sister I had always wanted.

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On my home, I stop at Target to buy you a treat.  
As I softly open the door, you slowly trot  
When you used to be quick to greet.

Now your back legs shake, your chocolate muzzle turning grey.  
When you look up at me with those eyes,  
It is hard not to stay.

I remember the days when you'd romp in the grass,  
And every once and awhile, you still roll onto your back.

Kicking your limbs excitedly,  
Running this way and that,  
Tearing around the house,  
And wrestling with Cat.

Now you sleep more than ever,  
Your gold eyes turned to milk.  
To get your attention,  
I talk louder towards your ears of silk.

Some members of our family  
Think it's time for you to go.  
But I know that when you're ready,  
You will let me know

Ever since I was little, I've always LOVED to be around people, and especially when I had the chance to hang out with my sisters. I don't get to do that as often anymore, because my two oldest sisters live away from home now, and my other two sisters are too busy to play with me any more. Mom and Dad still like to take me on long car rides up to the cabin, and most of my favorite memories have happened at both the old cabin (which was in McGregor, MN) and our new one that's in Grand Marais, MN. It was in McGregor where I first learned to swim, and retrieve my first duck. The new cabin is further away, but I don't mind the five-hour drive, as long as someone will share their McDonald's French fries with me along the way.

Last April, my oldest sister and her boyfriend took me with them up to the cabin. We spent time lounging on the couch, watching movies, and taking walks by Lake Superior. One night, they picked me up after their dinner date and took me to the bay. I LOVE the bay! I get to go wading, and chase geese, and get plenty of attention from strangers (I LOVE strangers too- so many new smells, and sometimes they give me treats!). When we reached a park bench under a streetlight, they tied my leash to the foot of the bench and stood near me. I watched Kate's boyfriend give her a letter, and next thing I knew he was down on one knee and giving her a small box (I was hoping that there would be food in the box, but no such luck). Then they were huggin' and kissin' and looking so excited that I just had to get in on the action. I ran up to them and jumped up on Kate (because that's what I do when I'm excited!), and found out that night that Luke was going to become my brother.

That night, while Kate and Luke were upstairs, I started to feel lonely (because you know that I LOVE being with people). I decided to go up to see what they were doing, so I trotted to the bottom of the stairs and looked up. Man, there were a lot of them, but I REALLY wanted to go up there. Even in just the short walk from the couch to the

*landing, I could feel my old age in my legs. I eyeballed the length and steepness of the stairs and decided that it was do-able. I just needed to take each step one at a time. Okay, here I go! Steps one, two, three, four (I was feeling pretty good!), five, six (Uh, oh- my legs were starting to shake...), seven (the smooth, wooden planks started to feel like that time I ran across the ice rink). I lost my footing, and my back legs couldn't seem to stay planted, so they slipped and the rest of my body followed. "Moose!" I heard my sister yell, running down the stairs two at a time, as I landed on the rug, back at the bottom of the stairs again. My age is really starting to catch up with me, and although mortality scares me half to death, at least I'm in the company of those who I love, and love me the most.*



Moose Invoice

Transaction Date: August 12, 1996

Initial investment: **\$250**

Dog Food: **\$20/month**

Treats: **\$10/month**

Toys: **\$25/year**

Retractable leash: **\$40**

Collar and tags: **\$15**

Annual vet visit: **\$250/year**

Pet-sitter: **\$25/week**

Over 12 ½ great years and still counting: **Priceless**

### **Reflection**

Since I do not consider myself to be a strong creative writer, I was at first put off by anything I wrote for this assignment. I wanted to write something that could be used in the classroom (such as a reaction to a piece of literature), but it felt unnatural. Instead, I chose a topic that was near and dear to my heart. My family's twelve and a half year old chocolate lab is starting to really act her age, and we are starting to think that the end is near for her. I wanted something to remember her by when the time comes for her to leave us, and I knew that I would not have it in me to write this once she is gone. I knew that I would not initially like anything that I wrote, so I forced myself to not cross anything out while hand writing, but to do my revising as I typed It up.

Back in January, when we first started to discuss this final project, I was a little worried about how this whole multigenre paper would work out. I have not really had an opportunity to write "for fun" since I was a freshman in college when I was required to take a creative writing class. Looking back at that class, I remember having fun writing papers that did not require much research and I could focus on my internal and external observations instead of making sure my facts were always correct. I also like the fact that I could write about almost anything I wanted. Although I know that creative writing is something that I could easily be doing at home on my own time, I find it easier to accomplish tasks such as writing when I have deadlines and grades depend on them. After reading Romano's text, I had felt so inspired to write something on my own, and by seeing all of the different examples he provides for his readers, I knew that I just had to

try it out for this final project. At some point during my teaching career, I would love to assign a multigenre paper to my students, and now, by having gone through the task myself, I have a better understanding of what it takes to write a paper like this and what steps are necessary to be more implicit about. I had intended to have my final project include 10 pieces, covering at least 7 different genres, but I found that in such a short amount of time, I was not able to reach that many pieces, or include that many genres.

While writing this paper, I found myself often wondering if I was doing the assignment correctly, as I felt that I was having too much fun to really be writing a good, legitimate paper. Coming out of the University of Minnesota program during this day and age, the cohort is being prepared to understand that there is more than just the typical, standard papers and there are all sorts of new literacies coming out of the woodwork. Dornan et. al reminds us that there are many types of literacies that may be used amongst schools, and after writing this type of paper, I realized that the multigenre assignment can actually serve as a way to reach not only the visual and technological literacy, but also critical, functional, and cultural literacy. Yes, there will be parents who may complain when they hear that their children are not writing a traditional piece, but as long as educators can back up their reasons for assigning it, especially in comparison to the traditional research or personal narratives, everything should work out fine. When assigning the multigenre paper to students, it is important to always inform them about why the choice was made by the teacher to have them complete this type of paper instead of the standard papers they have been writing all through school.

Writing this piece was very different from the experiences I have had with the more conventional types of writing. It did not take me as long to come up with a personal experience that I was interested in writing about, and I did not have to take as much time researching information that was integral to the paper. Instead, that time that would have been used for research was used more for reflecting. There was a lot of time that I spent just sitting and thinking about memories, and figuring out which genres fit each memory the best. The most difficult part of the whole process for me was the poetry aspect of my project. I have always been intimidated by poetry, but after the “After the End” group presented on the writing process, I was able to get over my insecurities about poetry writing.

Overall, the multigenre paper is one that can get students to be thinking in a different way about the same topics. It encourages students to take risks and show off their talents in a non-traditional way. While educators will have to take more time out of their lesson plans to teach the wide range of different genres that would be necessary to know in order to write a great multigenre paper, it ensures that teachers are actually teaching these genres that many people only learn if they take a creative writing class. For students, making the multigenre paper a standard in the classroom would mean that those who would never actually take a creative writing class on their own would still be exposed to literary elements that they would be missing out on. Educators would need to have their space set up in a way that their students will feel safe to take risks in their writing, and be comfortable to share their masterpieces with their peers.