



Source: Timothy Garton Ash, 'We Europeans must never forget that we created the Middle East conflict', *Guardian Unlimited*, 27/07/06.

Tags: [animals](#), [celebrations](#), [death](#)

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I can't recall the exact moment when my face met his. All I remember, and quite vividly at that, was a sudden bang of incisors and skin, succeeded by a thick, delirious outpouring of tears and blood. We had been friends for a solid two years, but it was a long time coming. When we first met, I was quite apprehensive of him. He would pathetically come to my beckoning call and never question anything I had to say, right or wrong, and so I thought him to be weak. Gradually over time, I warmed to our union and eventually became feverish with my power over him. Systematic lessons of tricks and conditioning, weekly excursions to the park, to the local café, the odd celebration at a friend's house eventually became our life together, and it was apparently good. He was dumb, and kind, and docile with joy. He would daily, 'Hah heh huh heh hah heh hah heh' to cuddle my face with his wet canine nose, to give out and accept, and I was willing.

So surprising then, that it all ended so tremendously. He was a present for my birthday, and that should have been a sign. I have never liked my birthday. I have never liked pets. For every year of my birthday, presents always came in the form of clothes that I never liked, and I would simply scowl at such foolish considerations. I began to gather these articles of cloth and stupidity onto a single black faux-leather chair that I found on the street. The chair became known as my 'Birthday Chair'. A vessel for the abandoned, a soft shrine to seat discarded objects made with bad stitching, busy patterns, awful fits, poly-cottons and now, the limp carcass of a dead vengeful dog.

I am a good worker. I am a good citizen of the country, and pay my taxes, and do all things according to a great law. My hair is kempt and secure, my suit is fine and well-constructed. I have a dishwasher, I have machines to keep things, as well as myself, good.

But now I miss him.

Not him, me. I miss the sound of my command. I miss my voice making change, resolve, the calm in the storm of my office. I miss myself with him, the weight of my voice. And now I am quiet with the loss of his life. I have now gotten

to a situation where I cannot speak comfortably, and I write a lot. I write all the time.

I wake up and write a shopping list.

A list of 'Things to Do Today'.

1. Speak less, and make goodness. Goodness is key.

A list of 'Things I have Yet to Do on Any Other Day'.

A list of 'People Who I Owe Money'.

A list of 'Things to do in the Short-term Future'.

A Five year Plan.

A Ten year plan.

A list of my favourite actors.

1. Omar Shariff.

2. Gregory Peck.

A list of holiday destinations.

A list of favourite foods.

A list of people I want dead (not that there's any people I want dead. I'm quite a happy person. I like most people. I write this list so that people won't think I'm a push-over.)

A List of My Favourite Opening Lines of a Novel or a Book that I have yet to Finish Reading:

1. Call me Ishmael...

Lists aside, I now wish to speak. I wish my time back with his life.

I am not a killer. I am not a killer. I am not a killer. I do not kill things, normally. I have lived my life with efficiency and programme, and this creature had entered my life with intervention in his heart and I was willing to accept. I accepted him with a coarse love like a snake in chalk, a veil in the shadows, a sill sinking milk light on a crisp winter. I held his paw in missing puzzle, a declaration of a violent rent and our strange love was a gap flowered during the melting ice, but he saw something I did not see. I do not see what it was. God bless him, whatever it was, the fuckin dog was wrong.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Brian Fuata.*