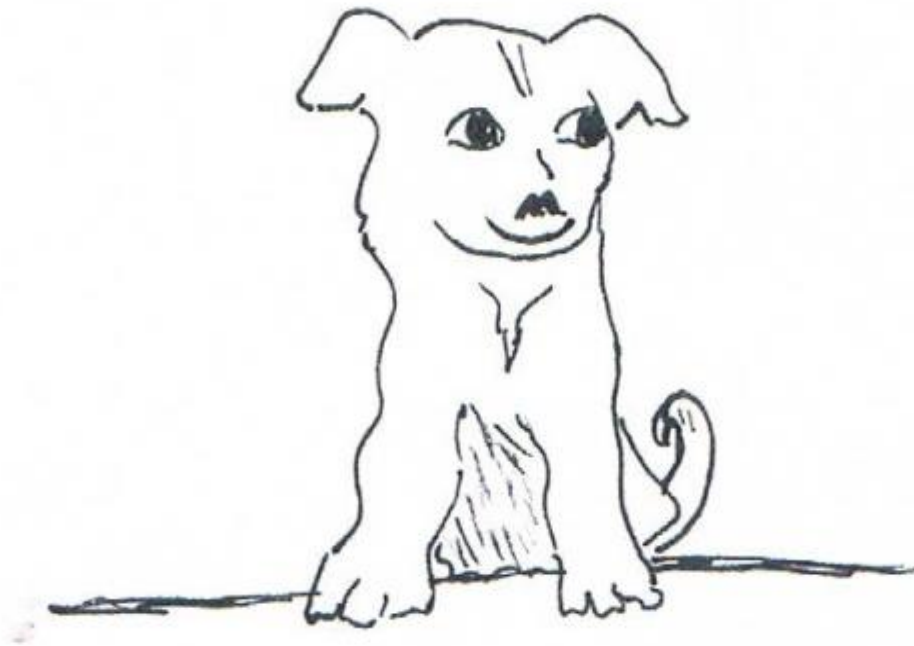


The Buddy Booklets



A series of booklets chronicling the life of Buddy, a little golden angel dog

Written by Brian and Rashne Baetz

Illustrated by Brian Baetz

Preamble

These little books, intended for kids from one to ninety-two, were written to honour the amazing life of a beloved family dog. Buddy turned out to be more than just a dog, but that's how all families feel about their lovely canine friends. It is a trilogy of books, one for his early, intermediate and later phases of his twelve years of life. Not much is concretely known about Buddy's early life, so the first booklet is more fiction than fact. But maybe it's not. Then Buddy became a part of our family, and first lived in California and then in Ontario, Canada. And then one day he slipped away. But we still feel him here, guiding us and loving us, because that's what great dogs do.

We love you Buddy, both now and forever. And we thank you for all the Love you beamed into all the households you were an integral part of...

With hugs and a kiss...

The Baetz Family and the Sidhwa Family

Dundas, Ontario and Huntington Beach, California

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The Buddy Booklets



Booklet One

In the Beginning

Written by Brian and Rashne Baetz

Illustrated by Brian Baetz

The Miracle of Birth



The sun rose quickly over the top of the mountains, splashing its beauty across the expanse of the desert and into the windows of the back room of a simple adobe home. The Momma dog rolled over slowly, taking care not to rise too quickly. She was cute and perky, with big golden eyes and golden eyelashes. But her little body had stretched a lot over the last eight weeks or so, and she was ready to soon have her puppies. As she rose to sniff her bowl and take a wee drink of water, something started to shift deep inside her. She barked out sharply for her owner to come quickly, and half an hour later she had experienced the miracle of birthing a little one six times over. The four little girl puppies and two little boy puppies were whimpering a bit and looking forward to their first meal, but she hesitated laying down for their feeding as something didn't feel quite right. And then a third wee boy puppy popped out, eyes pressed tight and shivering with excitement. He took a step or two towards his Momma, showing off his strong little chest and slightly bowed front legs. And with that they were all washed off and plopped into an avocado box that had a beautiful purple and red blanket folded into a comfortable nest for the mother dog and her seven hungry offspring.

Food on Demand



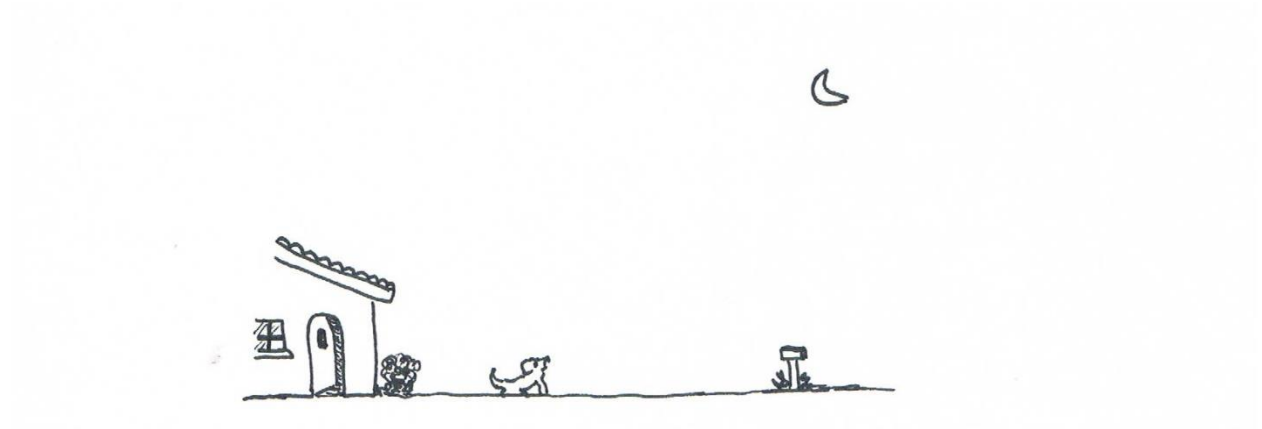
The next few days tumbled by in a sweet and gentle manner. The little puppies did a lot of sleeping, and when they were awake they always seemed to be hungry. The golden Momma dog would lie on her side for hours at a time, feeding her little ones. There were seven puppies, and she only had six teats for offering her milk, so one of them would have to wait. The puppy waiting would often sidle up to a nursing sibling, just to stay warm and be in a good position to nudge his brother or sister away when it was time to share. All of the puppies played together simply and sweetly like puppies do, and at certain times the Momma would go off to the avocado box and burrow into the purple and red blanket for an hour's rest, between more feeding and watching over her playful brood.

The Big Old World



The puppies grew quickly over the first few weeks, learning how to move their bodies and how to get along with one another. The Momma dog had given a name to each one of them that was different than the names given to them by the humans that they lived with. The little boy puppy who had come out last, well, he was different than the rest. He seemed to spend a lot of time by himself, and wanted to hang by his Momma a lot while the others played and got into mischief. She called this little one with the softest fur and the bowed front legs, 'Buddy', as he seemed the most affectionate of her little brood. She would take them all out to the dusty backyard when a door opening allowed, and out there he would stand off to one side of her and look around wondrously with his golden-brown big eyes. He was warmed by the sun, listened to the whispering of the wind, and marveled at the trees, flowers and birdsong. Sometimes, in the middle of one of these lessons about the world around them, one of the children would pop into the yard and begin to chase the Momma and her puppies. This game was kind of fun until Buddy got his little tail pulled hard by the boy, and the Momma dog growled ever so softly to remind him he needed to be gentle with all of her babies.

The Night Sky



The brother and sister puppies would play hard all day, inside and outside the simple home. After one last feed around twilight time, they would nestle in and around the avocado box, pulling on the purple and red blanket to get a little bit of fabric to keep them warm throughout the night. But Buddy was mysterious, and would hang out in a corner by himself looking philosophical. Or he would pad out to the kitchen and look for scraps on the floor that might have fallen from the cutting board in the dinner preparations. And every now and then one of the humans would go outside, and Buddy would slip out through the narrowing gap as the door closed. Out in the garden he could look up and see a mosaic of stars, so densely and beautifully arranged in the night sky. He would look up in wonder and simply soak in their beauty. Their twinkling seemed to tell him a story, about where he had come from. He was happy with his life as a puppy, but he felt that he was from somewhere else. The stars continued to sing and dance until Buddy realized he was shivering, so he waited for the next door-swing to take himself back into the side of his warm and sleeping Momma.

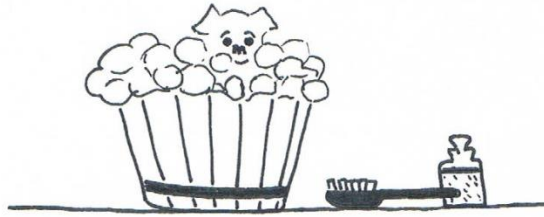
Not All Sweetness and Light



The puppies were growing up, getting bigger and becoming more independent. They weren't quite ready to be free of their Momma, at least at meal times. Now only three of them could drink milk at the same time, so the four others ranged around the yard looking for new things to see and explore. There was a click of the gate latch being lifted, and the Momma dog stood up at attention and let out a sharp bark. A man had come in to the yard with a box of fruit for the family, but he had mean eyes and a surly expression on his face. Momma had been nearly kicked by this man on several occasions in the past, and she didn't want any harm to come to her puppies. She barked several more times, calling out to her little ones to come to her side. Six of them came over immediately, but Buddy had his nose in a flowerpot, taking in all of its earthy essence. The fruit delivery man walked towards the back door but then saw the little golden puppy standing by himself. The mean chap flicked the toe of his boot towards the hindquarters of the little one, who sensed it coming and scooted away quickly towards his Momma.

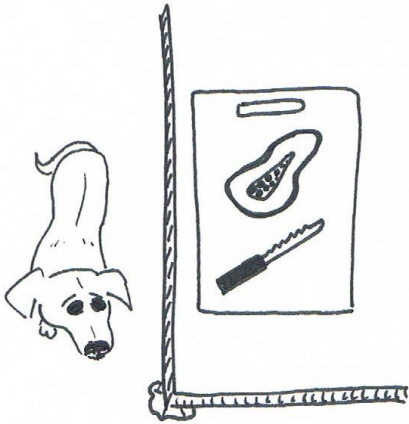
He looked over his shoulder and wondered why anyone would want to hurt him, in his first encounter with danger in his short existence.

Saturday Night and a Bar of Soap



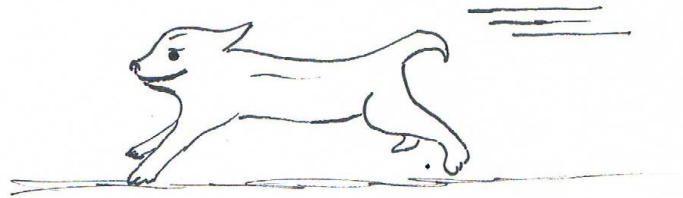
The days were hot and dusty, and the growing puppies got pretty grimy after a week of rooting in the garden and turning over pails of tools and boxes of flower pots. They played hard and ate ravenously and went to bed and slept like doornails. But when they were all wedged together beside their Momma, they emitted a distinct dirty dog aroma that was taking over the house. So on a Saturday night, the lady owner brought out a big washtub full of hot, soapy water. She gave the Momma dog her bath first, and she emerged all dewy-eyed and fresh-looking. Then each puppy got dunked and scrubbed, and then toweled off with a rough old pink towel. Buddy went last as he was hiding under the dining room table. It was his first bath and he sort of liked the feeling of freshness it gave, but when he was done he shook himself so hard that he tumbled sideways. He picked himself up off the floor and started to lick dry his legs and paws. It had been quite an adventure, and he cuddled up to his Momma and promptly fell asleep.

A Fruitarian Diet



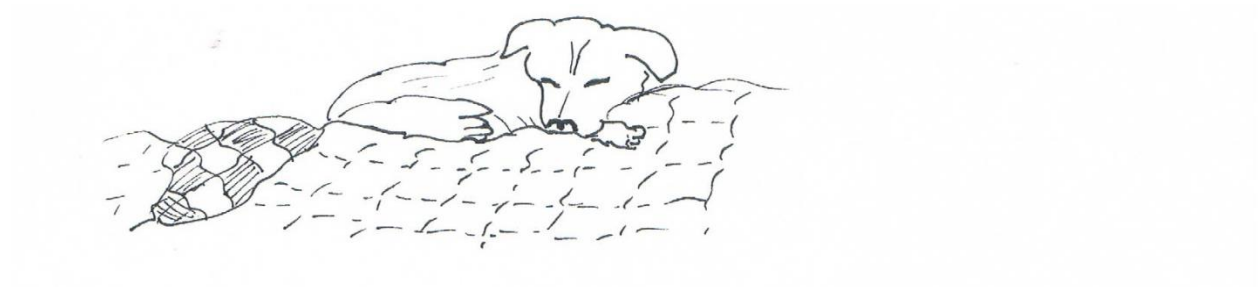
As the puppies got bigger and bigger, they started to get little bits of food other than their Momma's milk. Smells from the kitchen were very tantalizing to them all, but any food had to be soft and easily digested for their young tummies. Little bits of oatmeal were scraped out of a pot after breakfast, and put into a big red bowl beside the stove. A few of the puppies would be the first to be there and would scarf the entire scrapings, but after a while they learned that was too much for them and it was better to leave some for their brothers and sisters. Buddy liked the oatmeal well enough, but what he really loved was fruit. The area grew lovely tropical fruits, such as papayas and mangoes, and Buddy would wait patiently beside the lady of the household as she cut into ripe and luscious specimens of these local fruits. No schnibitz of fruit was too small for the golden Buddy, and he would eat it with a such a great smacking of his lips and dancing of his eyes that the owner would chuckle to herself and offer him a second piece. Buddy was starting to learn that his cuteness and gentle nature would bring him many blessings over his life.

First to the Finish Line



Buddy was a thoughtful little puppy, almost dreamy-eyed as he would go about his day. But as his legs got longer and his muscles got stronger, he started to get a sense that he had great potential as a little athlete. When his human mother would throw a soft, fuzzy ball away from the puppies, he would take off like a shot and be the first one to snag it and trot it back. He wouldn't be quick to drop it right away, as he had a sense he could catch his breath a bit before another round of fetch. When something dropped on the kitchen floor from the cutting board, he would dash quickly to grab the morsel before any of his brothers or sisters. Buddy was a zephyr, with lightning speed and quick reflexes. One day he saw a half-eaten burrito on the kitchen table, and he took two quick steps and sprung up onto the level surface and started to eat delightedly. The human Momma came out and scolded him, but she began to realize the golden pup was not only a fast runner but a great jumper as well.

Communal Sleeping Time



Buddy did love to poke around in the garden, exploring hidden nooks and enjoying the smells of the Earth and perfume from the flowers. And he always kept an ear out to the kitchen, just in case something might be dropped in to the communal food bowl. But the rest of his time was spent napping, as growing dogs need lots of rest to build their muscles. During the day he liked to nap alone, usually outside in the garden. Often in direct sunshine, to let the warmth soak deeply in to his body. And he knew exactly how much sun he needed, and then would retreat to a shady spot underneath the mango tree.

But night times were different. Then he would come inside, beside the stove in the kitchen. There his Momma would sleep, with all of her growing puppies. The collection of dogs was starting to take up more floor space as they grew bigger, and they would sleep side by side, in the ancient tradition of the wolfpack. Buddy would try to sleep on the outside, so he could feel the warmth of the pack when he needed to, but also to be a little more independent than his siblings squeezed tight into the middle.

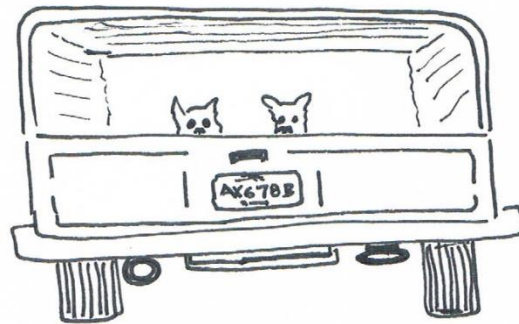
Fast Changing World



The puppies were no longer drinking milk from their Momma, and over the next week the wolfpack got smaller and smaller as one brother or sister would be scooped up by a neighbor or a friend who wanted a dog as a companion. This all happened so quickly that Buddy hardly realized he was the last puppy remaining of the brood. And then one night he heard his human mother and father talking in low tones, and he caught the snippets of 'work' and 'Orange County'. Buddy wasn't sure what this all meant, but early the next morning his Momma woke him with a bunt of her nose and gave him a lick, and he noticed she had a tear rolling down her furry cheek. Buddy was then rolled up in a blanket and taken to the next door neighbor, and five minutes later he heard a truck roll away. Buddy was unclear about what was going on, but tried to stay calm and told himself that this was just for a short time. "They'll be back", he reassured himself. But then he and the neighbour's dog, Salvatore (who was actually a cousin of Buddy's), were dressed up every day in cute little circus vests and colourful hats. If this wasn't bad enough, the neighbor lady started to train them to jump through hoops and bunt a ball back and forth to one another. He and Salvie wanted to be free and run and play, but the training became more intense and exhausting. One night he woke Salvie up and nodded towards the back door, which had

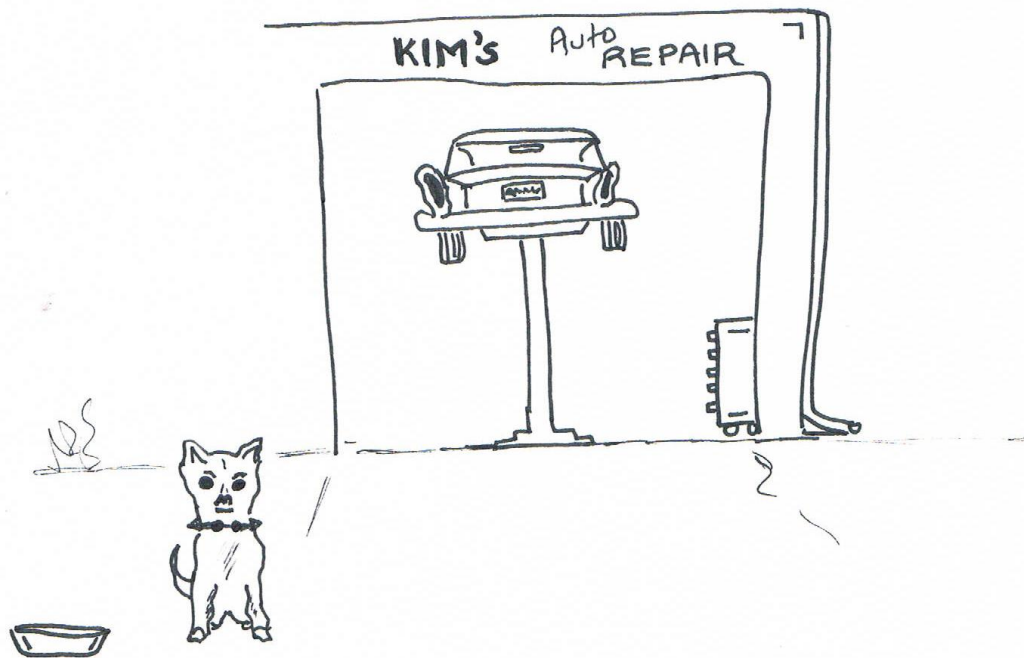
been left slightly ajar. They trotted along in the coolness of the night, going West by instinct, with Buddy holding the notion of 'Orange County' as some sort of mental compass.

Avocado Green, My Favourite Colour



The two doggies ran along the edge of a road heading west, looking over their shoulders from time to time to make sure they weren't being followed. It was still a few hours before sunrise, and they were starting to feel thirsty and hungry and more than just a little bit tired. They looked at each other, communicating an underlying fear without making a sound. A big truck revved its engine behind them and then blew past the two dogs, the resulting breeze making their ears flap a bit. Salvie stepped into a wee rut and mildly twisted his right paw, and a few moments later Buddy stepped onto a cactus needle that made him cry out in pain. Just at the point when they were both starting to wonder if life as a circus dog might have not been so bad after all, they had a stroke of luck. Up ahead at a little *tiende* store, the rattly truck had stopped so its driver could run in a delivery of avocados. He had left the rear gate down on the truck, just about a metre off the ground. Buddy leapt up first, then turned back to encourage Salvatore. The grey coloured dog got up $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way, but one of his back legs got caught under the lip of the gate. Buddy leaned forward and grabbed him by his collar and pulled him into the body of the truck. Fifteen minutes later, Buddy and Salvie had polished off two avocados each and had drifted off to sleep.

See you, Salvie



The truck pushed on through the early morning and into the bright sunshine of midday. The two doggies sought shade under a tarp, and had to hide behind avocado crates on a number of occasions when the driver stopped to make another delivery. They had come from a largely rural area and now it seemed like they were coming into a more built-up place, judging by the number of traffic lights they had to stop for and the increase in car horns and other noises. The dogs looked out through a hole in the tarp and could see palm trees and orange trees and lemon trees. They had no real game plan developed, as they had simply wanted to get away from being enlisted in the circus and had a vague hope they might link up with their human parents in some mystical place called 'Orange County'. As Buddy mulled this over, Salvatore looked out while they were stopped at a traffic light on Garden Grove Boulevard. He saw an auto repair shop on a corner that had a sign out front saying 'Guard Dog Wanted'. His heart jumped for joy and he turned and gave his cousin a parting lick, and then jumped over the rail

and weaved through the stopped cars, trotting over to the corner where he would lay in the sun for the rest of his days.

A Precious Parcel



Buddy was sad to see Salvatore go, and a bit anxious and disoriented. As he looked around the shadowy spaces inside the truck, he could see that the number of avocado crates was dwindling and that meant he was near the end of the line. He gnawed in to one last avocado to give him a bit of sustenance for what might lie ahead, and then he started to peek out over the back grate of the truck. More than a few times he contemplated jumping, but the oncoming traffic scared him into staying put. But just a few minutes later the truck slowed and then stopped for about ten seconds in a school crossing zone. Buddy knew this might be his best chance for an escape, so he hitched up over the grate and fell softly to the trucks' bumper, and then silently landed on hot asphalt. He dodged between several cars and ran up onto a sidewalk in front of an elementary school. A brown UPS truck was pulled off to the side, its driver making a delivery of textbooks. The delivery man came out wearing the trademark UPS brown shorts and shirt, and looked quizzically at Buddy as if to ask why he was standing all alone without being on a leash or with an owner. Buddy got nervous and dashed into the fenced school yard, while the driver

followed behind him, calling out reassurances. The little dog miscalculated and ran down a walled-in walkway that led to the school gym. Too late came the realization that he was trapped, and he felt the strong hands of the UPS driver grab him by the scruff of his neck, and he was then carried back and thrown unceremoniously into the back of the UPS truck.

Divine Destiny



Many days rolled by, and Buddy became slightly accustomed to the barking of the other dogs being held at the Orange County dog pound. He had his own little cage, was given two square meals a day, and was taken out for two short walks daily. And he had plenty of time to think, and wonder what would come next. Given what he had seen from the two trucks he had rode in, this Orange County place was much bigger than he had thought and he now knew the chances of reuniting with his original owners were pretty slim. He certainly missed his dog Momma, and the thought of never seeing her again made him pretty sad. But during his naps he kept having a recurring dream, one that had a new owner coming and claiming him and taking him to his new home. Every now and then someone would come to look at

him, but they would then quickly move on to another cage. Day after day went by, with the same dream reassuring him. And then one day, the staff at the shelter sprayed some water on him while he was sleeping in the back of the cage. He rose up quickly, not at all happy about being so rudely awoken. But as he puffed up his chest and curled his lip, he could feel the energy of the older woman peeking into his cage. He quickly gave up his hang-dog expression and started to wag his tail and flashed his golden eyelashes. It was his future owner, the person in the dream! Buddy went over to the front of the cage and leaned in for a pat, and knew deep down that his long journey had been worthwhile.

~the end~

The Buddy Booklets



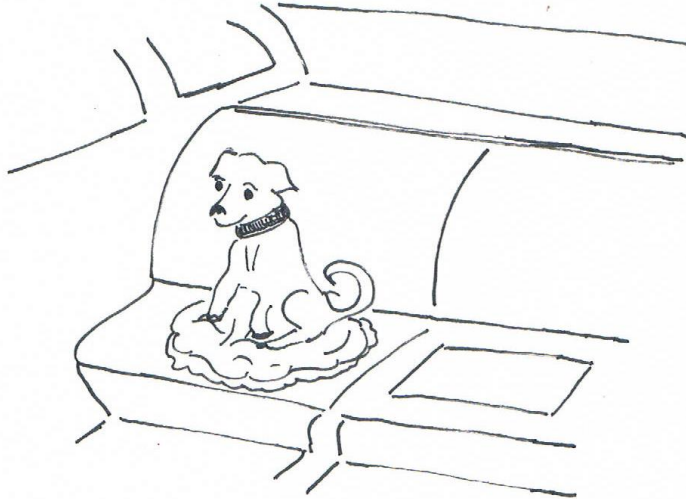
Booklet Two

Life Near the Beach

Written by Brian and Rashne Baetz

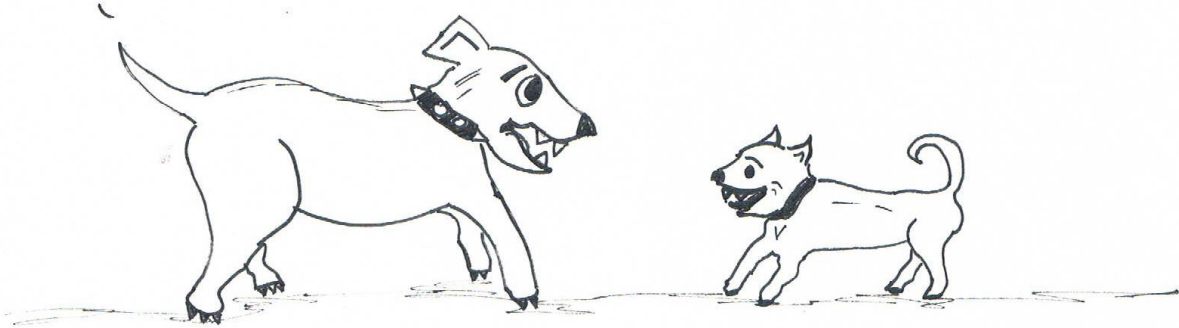
Illustrated by Brian Baetz

Settling In



The ride from the SPCA headquarters up in the City of Orange down to Huntington Beach took about forty-five minutes. Buddy sat in the back seat on a red blanket and took in the views of grapefruit, orange and lemon trees bearing their abundant bounty in the yards of homes along the way. His new human Momma kept checking on him, giving him reassuring smiles and kind nods of her head. When they got to his new home, in a gated seniors community about a mile from the beach, he was led by leash to a nice little corner unit with beige-coloured stucco and brown wood trim. He padded around inquisitively, peeking into the kitchen off the main living room, and then he slyly pattered down to the end of the hall to investigate the master bedroom and a guest bedroom. He heard his name being called, with the urgency that comes with food being involved, and he ran the length of the carpet to find a bowl with a Little Caesar's salmon dinner in it. Buddy was indeed hungry, as the food at the pound had been certainly less than desirable, so he polished off the fish and vegetables in short order. A nice bowl with fresh water was adjoining his food, and a few minutes later he was off on his first walk to the clubhouse area to do his business and get some exercise. An hour later, with diminishing light, Buddy jumped up on a yellow upholstered chair in his Momma's bedroom. She patted him and said a prayer over him in an ancient language that he didn't understand but made him feel welcome and cared for. She looked down lovingly, and exclaimed "You are my golden boy, with golden hair and golden eyes and golden eyelashes!" It looked like he had indeed landed in a very good place.

A Few Bumps in the Road



A number of uneventful days went by, but then one day Buddy woke up from a vivid dream where he and his cousin Salvatore were running from the evil *frutas* man as they made their way up to California from Mexico. The dream had rattled him considerably, so when he was taken out for his morning walk he felt more than a bit mischievous. His new Momma just so happened to let him off his leash to do his business on the wide expanse of lawn near the clubhouse. Buddy took off like a shot, running beside the tennis courts and then down a narrow lane between the courts and the swimming pool. His Momma called out to him, and then came over to chase him down. Buddy thought this was a big game, so he tore around the big lawn in crazy, madcap circles. After ten minutes his Momma gave up and sat on a bench, and a few minutes after that he got tired of running without the thrill of being chased. They went home immediately and it was not lost on Buddy that he didn't get his midday biscuit treat that day.

Two days later, Buddy was out being walked and they came abreast of a mean-looking dog and his owner. The other dog growled and showed his teeth. Buddy thought twice about it, growled deeply, and then charged. But the other dog was much bigger and tougher, and twisted sideways and gave Buddy a sharp bite on his back leg. This opened up a big gash, with lots of blood. A quick but expensive trip to the vet for emergency surgery solved the problem, but suffice it to say that Buddy didn't get his midday biscuit treat that day either. His Momma sat on her sofa with a frown on her face, realizing that the little golden angel from the pound had more than a bit of the devil lurking deep inside of him.

A Proud Graduate



It had become clear that the little golden dog had manners suitable for the rough-and-tumble life of a rural farm, not a genteel gated community in Orange County. So his Momma enrolled him in the next offering of the Huntington Beach Dog Obedience Training School, and for the next eight weeks Buddy went off to class with nine other rambunctious but generally good-at-heart doggies. He learned how to listen more effectively, and how to better focus when someone was giving him instructions. He learned how to walk nicely one step behind his Momma, and to come quickly when he was called. But most of all he learned he would get a wee liver treat whenever he was a good and obedient dog. And at the end, he passed his performance test with flying colours, and even did well on the supplementary exercises of shaking a paw and fetching a chew toy. A week later he attended the graduation ceremony where he was presented with an academic mortarboard hat and a handsome diploma. The smile on his Momma's face for the official graduation photograph made Buddy feel that all of his hard work had been more than worth it.

The Rhythms of Life



Life got calmer after his obedience school success, and Buddy settled down into the daily rhythms of life in his new home. He would sleep in according to the schedule of his Momma, and go for a short walk to do his business before having a light breakfast. Mornings and afternoons were generally occupied by napping on the living room carpet, and keeping a watchful ear trained for anyone going by the front door or the side door patio. When anyone did walk by, Buddy took his cue and barked vociferously until all signs of life had diminished. This activity puffed him up considerably, and his Momma might throw a soft toy down the hallway so he could run and fetch and burn off some steam in the bargain. Then he might jump up on the sofa and watch a bit of TV at the side of his Momma, trying to understand the plot development of various sitcoms or marvelling at nature scenes from faraway countries. And before his supper, he would get his long walk of the day, all the way around the big loop past the clubhouse and back around. There were always ladies and their doggies sitting outside the clubhouse, who called out to the new arrival and made him feel most welcome. It looked as if the golden pup was fitting into his new routine most admirably.

A New Look



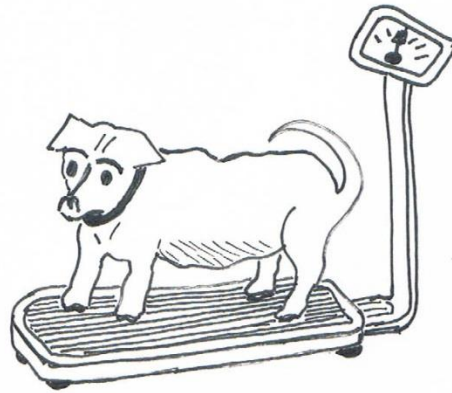
No one was exactly sure how old Buddy was, but he had been born a little more than a year ago and was now fully grown. And in that time he had never had any sprucing up or a haircut of any kind. He looked a bit shaggy in places, and had long streamers of golden hair swirling down from both of his ears. One fine morning, his Momma looked down at him and realized he needed to get bathed and groomed that very day. So she popped Buddy into her Camry and zoomed up some back neighbourhoods to the PetSmart on Adams Street. A nice little Mexican gal fussed and clucked over the boy doggie for the better part of an hour, and he emerged looking trimmed and polished and clean. As part of the grooming, he now sported a spiffy green bandana around his neck, making him look like a tiny little cowpoke. And when his Momma picked him up and kissed him, she quickly realized the extra benefit of the grooming exercise. The little dog smelled like a rose, and all the residues of his childhood home and the avocado truck and the dog pound were now gone for good.

Tea and Toast



Food had always been a big priority in the household where Buddy had landed, and back in earlier days delightful Indian dishes were prepared every day for a hungry and appreciative family. But things change over time, and the cooking of square meals had become less frequent. When this did happen, Buddy always stood patiently off to the side of the stove, willing little bits of *dal* or potatoes to make their way onto the kitchen floor. But on days of no cooking, his Momma would often make herself a nice cup of tea and accompany this with a slice of toast with butter and strawberry jam. Buddy wasn't much for tea, but the sight of warm, buttered bread always made him wag his tail in the spunkiest and cutest of ways. His Momma observed this between sips of her tea and nibbles of her toast. And from then on, a tradition was born. Whenever she had a piece of toast, Buddy also got a slice of warm, buttered toast and a wee bit of jam. He ate this with great fanfare, chewing each mouthful with the minimum number of bites and then looking up at his Momma to see if there was any remote chance of getting a wee tip of her toast. He would lick his lips broadly and do a few slow laps of the hallway, before settling down on his pooch pad and dreaming sweet dreams of fresh-baked bread.

Packing on the Pounds



Buddy was not a puppy anymore, and he had pretty much grown to his full height. He was a muscular little dog, and could run like the wind and jump like Michael Jordan. But with limited exercise and regular meals and dropped goodies, the little fellow started to take on a bit more girth each day. The regular toast in the evening was the final straw, as Buddy would gobble this down and go straight off to beddy-bye. The weight crept up on him, and he didn't feel as motivated to run or jump. And as the pounds got packed on his tiny frame he became more and more prone to nap most of the day. His Momma didn't really catch on until one of the neighbours exclaimed 'My, that little feller is not so little anymore!'. So the next time she was at PetSmart she popped him on the scale and her eyes almost popped out of their sockets. Buddy now weighed 22 pounds, a full ten pound gain in a short period of time. As he stepped off the scale she could see that his tummy was almost dragging on the ground. Some severe weight reduction measures would have to be taken, and pronto.

Visitors From the North



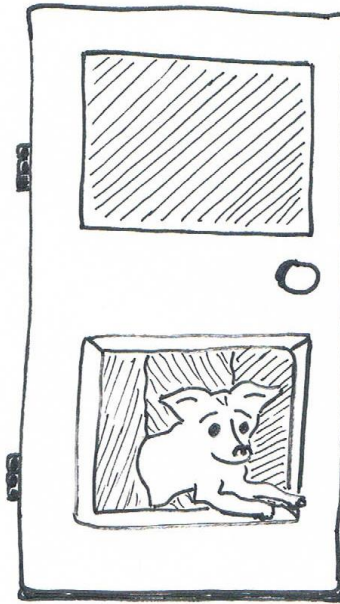
And in the middle of all the adjustments to having a new dog in the household, two visitors arrived one fine day in mid-December in a flurry of hugs and dropped suitcases. It was the grown daughter of Buddy's Momma and her daughter, Buddy's Momma's granddaughter. They had flown in from Canada for their annual visit and escape from the snow and ice of a Canadian Winter. Buddy knew they were family, but he still felt the need to bark and be a bit standoffish for the first few hours. He was largely ignored by his own Momma, who was busily serving up plates of piping hot *dal* and rice to her newly arrived family members. But once the late dinner was out of the way, he crept over to the sofa where the young woman sat. She smiled at him and patted the sofa and he jumped up right away. In an instant he rolled on his back and offered his underbelly for the longest tummy rub he had ever experienced. He opened his eyes after a bit and realized she was a photographer, who had been taking photos and video of him with his paws cutely up in the air. He snuggled in to her side and nosed her for a pet, happy to connect with his broader family.

Buddy's Beef Brisket



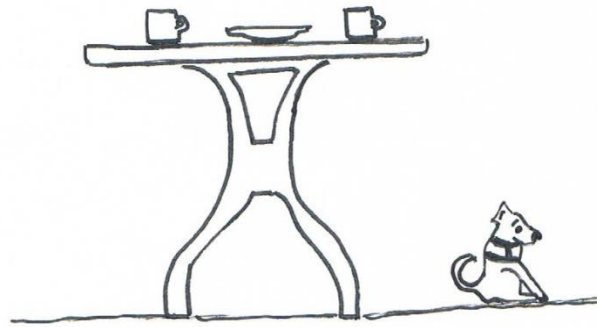
Before the Canadian females departed for home, the three humans bundled up little Buddy and his leash and took him down to the pier so that the visitors could see the Pacific Ocean one last time. It was Buddy's first visit to the beach, and he became very excited and quite nervous. When they parked a block or two away from the pier, he peeked out of the back window and saw lots of restaurants and cafes and many people milling around. A short walk down Main Street caused his nose to quiver with all of the different food smells. The pier was exciting but equally overwhelming, as he saw big breaker waves crashing down in a spray of white foam and many wetsuit-wearing surfers riding high on the waves. After a long walk up and down the pier, Buddy started to feel a wee bit hungry. A movie shoot was going on down by the beach trail, and a kitchen trailer was parked just north of the pier. A chef came out wearing a tall, white chef's hat and carrying a steaming tray of cooked meat. He looked kindly in Buddy's direction and exclaimed "Say there, little fella', would you like a piece of beef brisket?" With a quick nod of his doggie chin, Buddy was soon given a huge chunk of brisket with the use of silver tongs by the chef. Buddy basically inhaled the delicious meat, which was almost as big as he was. He went home and had a long and contented nap, dreaming of his next trip to the beach with big pieces of beef brisket coming into the shore on surfboards.

Not Exactly a Five Star Hotel



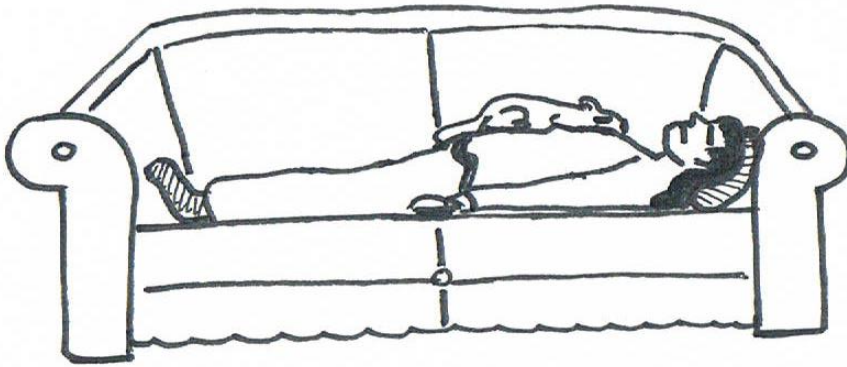
Buddy's Momma liked to travel when the opportunity arose. Sometimes to Canada to visit her daughter and her family, sometimes on a short cruise out of Long Beach with a friend. This meant Buddy had to be put into a kennel, at some place inland that reminded Buddy of when he first came to Orange County and peeked out of the back of the avocado truck to see strip malls and parking lots and homes with citrus trees in their front yards. The kennel was decent enough, but had a smell that wasn't quite to Buddy's liking. He only got two very short walks each day, mainly to do his business on the hard asphalt of the parking lot beside the kennel. The food wasn't much to write home about, either. But it was the other dogs that seemed to really make this an unpleasant experience for the little golden fellow. After he showed his teeth one too many times to growling kennel mates, his Momma decided that was it for the kennel. On her next trip, Buddy was taken to his Momma's son's house, where he stayed alone in the house all day with the son's doggie, Zoe. Buddy growled a bit at her at the start, but things settled down nicely after that. The two dogs had the run of the house, and could go out into a nice backyard anytime they wanted through a doggie door. Overall, life flowed smoothly during future vacations for his Momma.

The Dog Who Flies



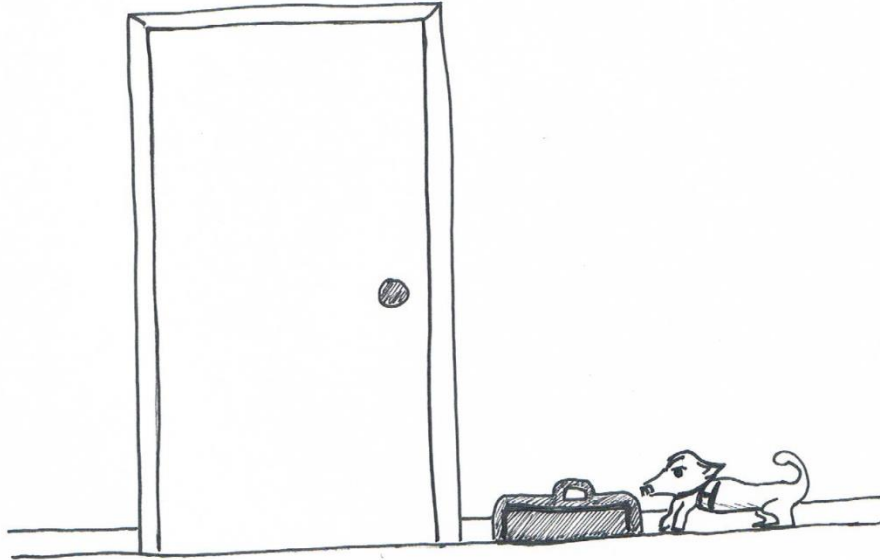
In the Summers, two other visitors would arrive around the Fourth of July celebrations, Buddy's Momma's son-in-law and her grandson. The days were hot and sunny, and the two visitors would often spend lots of time down at the beach. There were also longer day trips, during the times when the young grandson would be sleeping in, or staying overnight with friends. One day, Buddy had a real adventure, sitting in the back seat while the car whizzed across a big bridge over the Port of Long Beach. Half an hour later, Buddy was enjoying the serene beauty of the Wayfarer's Chapel in Palos Verdes. After that he was snuck onto the outdoor patio of the Starbucks in downtown Palos Verdes, soaking up the views of a shimmering sun setting over a silvery Pacific Ocean. And on another day, Buddy had an appointment to see the vet over on Newland Avenue. As he was being driven there, Buddy could see that the window was open on the driver's side. He didn't much like the idea of getting a needle from the vet, so Buddy leaned back and jumped and literally flew across the air space of the front seat. It was a good thing the Canadian visitor was decent at basketball, as he managed to grab Buddy in mid-air by his collar and plunked him down hard on his lap, while still driving with one hand. The little golden dog was chastened by the scolding he received, and missed out on his normal treat at the vet, as he had been such a naughty dog on the car trip over.

More People in the House



Time rolled by and things changed considerably. Buddy's Momma had a fall, and it was decided that she needed someone to stay with her and take care of her and Buddy. The day shifts were handled by a spunky Filipina woman named Emma, who had been a television reporter back home before she came to the United States. She liked to sing while she cooked, and Buddy would stand by the entrance to the kitchen, patiently waiting for any scraps to fall and clamping down his ears as he wasn't much for boisterous singing. He would get walked in the morning by Emma, and then once again before she left for home. The night shift caregivers were from the island of Tonga, tall and strong women who could lift Buddy's Momma up out of bed in the twinkling of an eye. They liked fried chicken, and sometimes Buddy would get treated with a morsel of golden tastiness. The Tongan lady who stayed the longest was Lute, who would go to bed at 6:30 and have Buddy curl up to sleep on her chest. Lute did snore, but Buddy put up with it as she was so kind and loved him so.

Defending His Momma



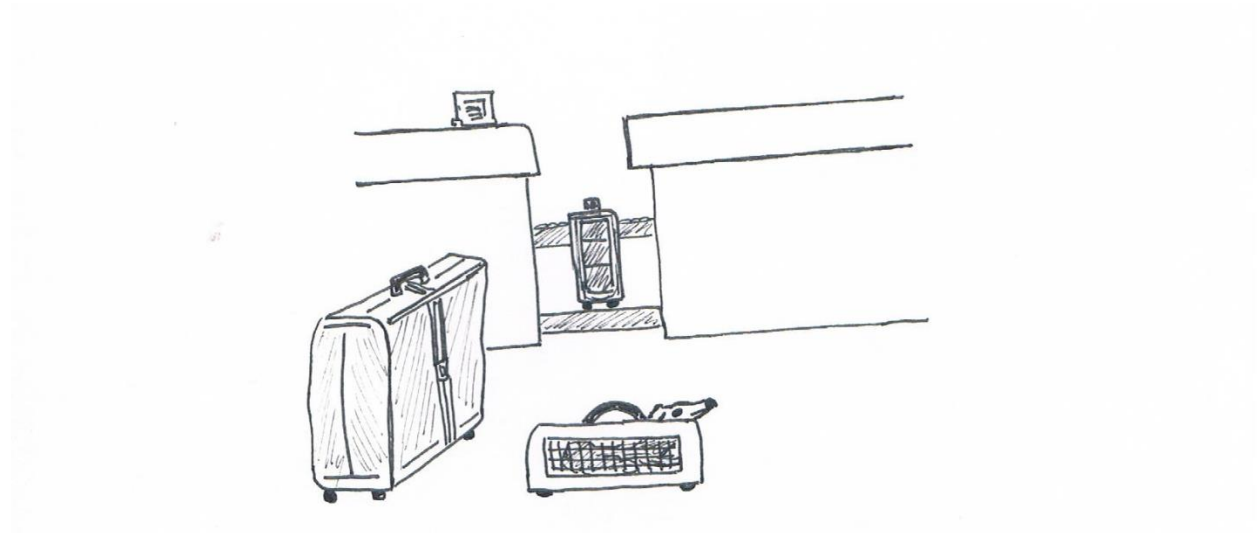
His Momma was slowing down even more, and would spend a lot of time resting in bed or sitting out in the living room on her favourite easy chair. Buddy would sit by her, hoping for a pat on top of his head or a scratch under his chin. He wasn't getting outside as much these days, and was getting a bit stiff due to the lack of activity. But the caregivers had observed that he needed to trim down a bit and had adjusted his food accordingly. So he was almost back to his normal weight and was doing relatively well under the circumstances. Sometimes nurses would come to take blood pressure and other measurements of his Momma, and Buddy allowed this as they seemed relatively kind. But one day a doctor with a black bag came to the home, and Buddy didn't cotton on to him so well. The doctor was a bit grumpy, and scowled in Buddy's direction. The tests he did made his Momma cry out a bit in pain, so when the doctor tried to leave, Buddy was ready for him. The little golden dog leapt up and bit the man's pants well above the knee. It was a good thing that there was some extra fabric so no skin was broken, but the pants suffered a pretty big gash from Buddy's teeth. The little dog was rebuked by the caregiver who rushed in, clapping her hands, and Buddy's Momma would receive a bill from the doctor to replace the damaged trousers.

Coyotes in the Shadows



Sometimes Buddy didn't get his second walk until late into the evening, and Emma might leash him up and take out the garbage at the same time. One night in late November, down by the recycling bin area, Buddy's nose started to twitch. He smelt an animal scent, and it was an animal he hadn't crossed paths with before. He thought he saw something move furtively in the shadows, but he wasn't exactly sure. A week later, on his morning walk, a bunch of folks were seen standing around with furrows in their brows. They told the caregiver that a coyote had been seen inside the gated community, and that an older gentleman having coffee in his solarium had seen a muscular male coyote leap over the eight foot fence without breaking stride. This sent a wave of fear through Buddy's heart, as he instinctively knew he would be an easy meal for a hungry coyote. And a few weeks later, when family was back visiting from Canada, a coyote was seen just three doors from Buddy's home. The ruthless wild animal quickly ran down one of the neighbourhood cats, gave it a quick shake between its jaws, and then dropped its lifeless body to the ground before taking off down a row of garages. Something needed to be done, and fast, to keep little Buddy safe.

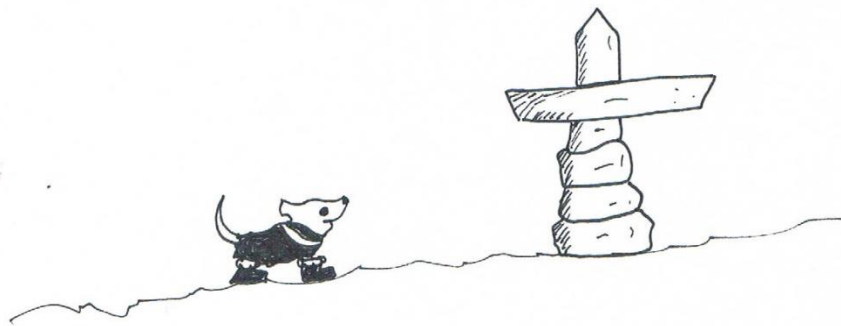
Flying to Canada



From that point on, things moved quickly to get the little golden dog off to a safer place to live. The visitors from Canada decided he would come home with them in a week's time. A Martha Stewart travel case was found after a lot of investigation, as Air Canada had demanding specifications for any travelling dogs. Buddy had a tearful goodbye with his California Momma, and gave her two long licks on her cheek as he bid her *adios*. The ride to LAX was uneventful, and Buddy was taken to the outdoor doggie rest space that even had a built-in miniature fire hydrant. He was as quiet as a mouse on the Christmas Day flight, without as much as a wee bark coming from him. He went through customs and luggage as quick as a whistle, so quick that his new Dad mistakenly tried to leave the luggage area without declaring that a dog had just crossed an international border. A sharp-eyed agent pulled them back for a thorough inspection, but soon enough Buddy was out on the curb at Pearson Airport. It appeared to his eye that it was a windswept, cold and snowy land. For a little dog who had been raised on an avocado farm in northern Mexico, he might as well have landed on another planet. But he snuggled in to his new parents' laps on the drive home, happy to be starting a new chapter in his life.

~the end~

The Buddy Booklets



Booklet Three

Life in the Great White North

Written by Brian and Rashné Baetz

Illustrated by Brian Baetz

A Snowy Saturn?



Buddy landed at his new home in Dundas, Ontario, after a long ride on a cold, dark highway. It was Christmas Day, 2012, and the little golden dog coming in through the front door was the best Christmas present ever for his new parents. The upstairs of the home had been turned upside down to allow for hardwood floor refinishing during their trip to California, so the trio of arrivals had to sleep downstairs in the teenager flat beside a rumbly furnace that labored on through the night to keep the old house warm. Buddy slept like a baby on the folded-out IKEA sofa bed, only popping up his head intermittently to cock an ear toward a sound that reminded him of the rustle of coyotes in the shrubs outside his California home. The next day he got a proper breakfast and then was promptly taken out for his morning walk. He had his coat on, but it was like wearing a light Spring windbreaker on that cold and blustery day. Buddy's muscles tightened up as the wind seemed to blow right through him, and the idea of stopping to do his business seemed preposterous given how he felt. But after many blocks of stopping and walking, walking and stopping, Buddy finally came through and could go home to a warm living room. He looked around at the snowbanks and stark winter trees with no signs of leaves, and wondered if he had perhaps been taken to another planet?

Life on the Edge



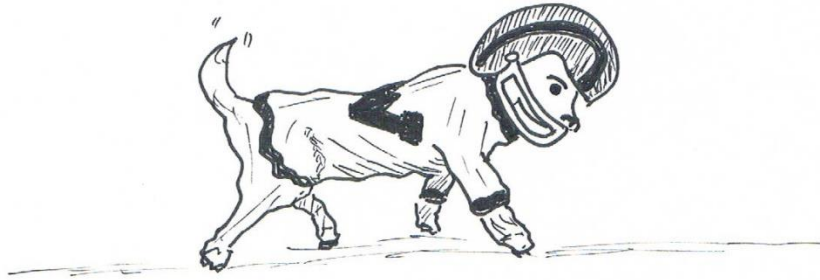
Buddy felt a bit confused in those early days in his new home in the Great White North, and he seemed a bit preoccupied and a bit suspicious of noises and new people. He loved to chew paper, any kind of paper. If a Kleenex got accidentally dropped on the floor, he would chew up its gossamer whiteness into little wispy bits in a matter of seconds. Receipts left on the staircase for filing in the upstairs den would be chewed into a fine spaghetti by the time his parents came home. He was scolded a bit for this, but simply ducked his head and just kept chewing on things as it eased his anxiety and gave him something to do. But things came to a head on the chewing front when his new Dad returned home on a Friday afternoon and found his favourite art book, a collection of local artists' work on the Dundas Valley titled *On The Edge*, in a thousand pieces on the living room rug. Buddy took a rap under the chin for that particular exploit, and internally vowed to himself that the paper chewing would have to stop. But over the course of a week his anxiety spilled over into new frontiers, where Buddy nipped three neighbours without so much as a how-do-you-do as a preliminary. The first two were named Dave, but then there was also Paddy. The reputation of the little golden mutt from the Golden State spread quickly, with another neighbor exclaiming "Keep that dog away from me, he's a fear-biter!"

Tough Love



It was pretty clear that the new dog in the household was going to be a project. The humans thought long and hard, and then put in a call to Christine, the animal communicator. She beamed in to Buddy right away, and told them that he was afraid and disoriented in his new setting. And that he was confused, as he had become the leader of the pack back in California, and thought he needed to continue in that role. She communicated to him that he could relax, that in his new home the only work he needed to do was to love his new Mom and Dad; and she reassured all that he would become very good at this single but very important task. Buddy's parents also hired a dog whisperer to come and show them how to train their new furry child. Paula showed up the next day and Buddy's behavior changed almost immediately. She showed the parents how to be in control and assert themselves as co-leaders of the pack. This included many detailed aspects on walking, sitting, eating and all the other things that make up a dog's life. They went out on a trial walk, with Dad walking briskly and keeping Buddy in check. When they came upon Nikki, a street dog from Los Angeles who had just recently been adopted into a Dundas home, Buddy acted like an angel with her and everyone was happy with how things were turning out.

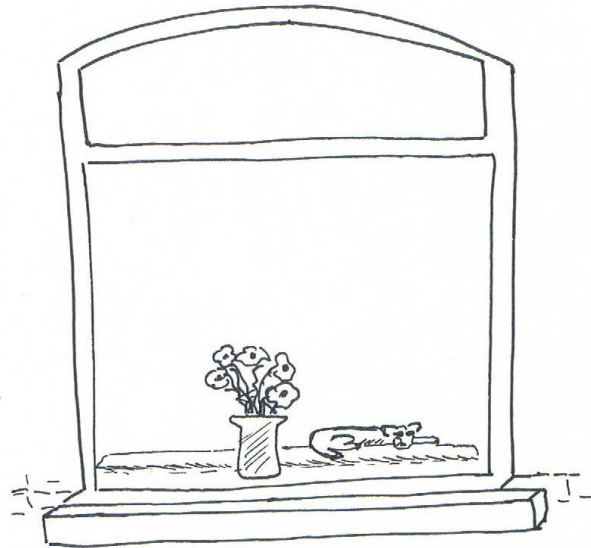
Two Steps Forward, One Step Back



Buddy settled into his new routine, getting two square meals a day and regular walks and lots of nap time. The house was generally quiet, which suited him just fine. But he liked company as well, and was delighted when his Dad's friend came to stay for a short while. Wael would make Buddy sit up and beg, and the best incentive for this was a piece of banana. Wael called him the 'crazy banana dog', as he would dance and flash his golden eyes to get the morsel of sweet fruit. And a little bit later, Brian the handyman came over to help with home improvements. He brought his lunch with him, part of which was a large banana, ripe with big brown freckles. Brian started to munch away on his dessert, and Buddy began to whimper and dance. After the kind visitor realized the dog loved bananas, he pulled off a good half and gave it to the waiting pooch, who greedily snarfed it back in record time.

But not everything went off like a charm. One morning his Dad let him out in the backyard, testing the little fellow to see if he could do his business and zip back inside without the restraint of a leash. When a squirrel skittered across the deck, Buddy chased him around the yard and back behind the garage. The Dad yelled out and went to the property line to pull the little pup to safety. But he was nowhere in sight! Retreating quickly, he saw a golden flash of tail flaring down the driveway, crossing Park Street without so much as a sideways glance and running off towards a neighbour's backyard. He sprinted quickly and trapped him in a gated alley beside the neighbour's garage. Buddy got flustered and turned, attempting to run past his Dad like a football halfback. A strong hand quickly clamped him at the neck, and the little dog was hustled home with the newly determined reality that the golden mutt could never be trusted off-leash again.

Rhythms and Routines



It had been a bit of a rocky start, but things settled down substantially as Spring unfolded itself. Buddy needed his two daily walks, and didn't like going out in the cold if he could help it. So when his leash and sweater were taken down from their hooks, the little mutt typically hid under the dining room table or in a far corner of the TV room. But once found, and his sweater was put on, he had the habit of doing a lap of the house while his parents put on their coats and shoes. His favourite sweater was a dark blue wool number, with red piping trim and a big 'W' crest on the center top. People would chuckle at it while he was out on his walk, asking if he was a graduate of Western or Wisconsin, but the colours didn't line up with either of these schools. Buddy always wore his outfit while out on patrol, and would get a friendly word and a pat from the cute neighbor kids Lucy and Cameron, or a shoutout from the schoolyard from Coco who lived just around the corner. Even kids who were a tad shy like Chloe and Ella, two sisters who walked to school together, always stopped for a pat and an ear-rub for the golden dog. Buddy enjoyed the attention to some degree, but didn't have a natural affinity for kids. This changed a bit when a wee boy called Malcolm came to dinner with his parents, and was found feeding a whole bowl of popcorn to Buddy, one piece at a time. Food had always been one of Buddy's greatest weaknesses, and Malcolm became his number one kiddie friend right then and there.

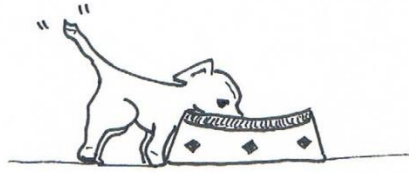
But Buddy reserved most of his attention to keeping an eye out for his parents and watching their every move. He would sit by the door and wait for his Mom to return from her work, or sit up on the ridge of the living room sofa and peek out through the tulips in the big blue vase and wait for his Dad to come back from his longer Saturday runs. One time he had been taken for one of these runs, a long loopy 5K out to Olympic Drive at the gateway to the EcoPark. Buddy had done quite well, but it had been concluded that it had perhaps been too much for his little legs, so it had been a first and last experience. But the little zephyr had not forgotten this run, and would sit longingly on subsequent Saturdays envisioning being out with his Dad, in spirit at least if not in physical form.

We Get By With a Little Help From Our Friends



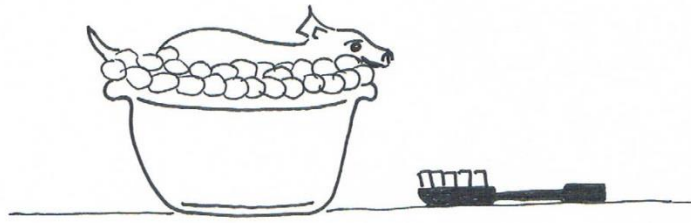
A dog is a lot of work, and sometimes the humans of the household have to get away for a day or even travel for a longer period of time. The pooch needs walking and feeding, petting and cuddling, no matter what his parents are up to. The couple's last doggie had protested every time they went away, going on a hunger strike or refusing to do his business. They resolved it would be different for the new dog of the household, and through a series of complex interactions they came upon a wonderful fireball of a woman. Mary loved dogs, and was great with them, so she was happy to look after Buddy for a day or a week or a month. This meant he didn't have to go to a kennel, or be zipped away up to a farm in Flamborough that housed a passel of dogs. Buddy went off on a series of play dates with Mary, and seemed to scoot away with her without so much as a fare-thee-well to the bemused parents. She took him on lots of walks, and he got to lounge around on any of a dozen tuffets sprinkled throughout Mary's home. An art teacher with a good eye for composition, Mary also took some lovely photos of the pooch. Buddy also loved when his parents' friends Sandy, Margaret and Joanna would come over for tea, as he would be guaranteed a chin scratch or an ear massage from people who were dog lovers. His Dad's meditation group also made a fuss over him. He would go from lap to lap, soaking up the positive energy and emitting Love to all of those who needed affection from a little someone with soft fur and golden eyes.

A Taste for Food



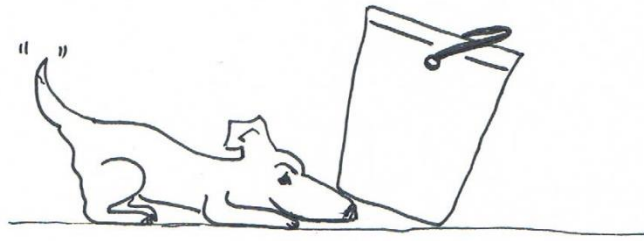
The kitchen was at the center of the household, and Buddy kept an eye out for any possible activity that might be food related. He was a little dog, so as soon as he came in from his early morning yard outing, he needed some food in his tummy. He typically ate his breakfast quickly, and then went off to one of seven favourite places to have a wee nap and digest his food. When his parents started to prepare their breakfast, Buddy kept a sharp ear out for anything falling on the floor or an encouraging whistle indicating a banana slice or a bit of avocado had been designated for the dog of the household. This would be received with sparkly eyes, followed by an appreciative licking of his lips. This process would be repeated at lunch, with his Mom letting little schnibitz of cheese or chicken find their way onto the kitchen floor. Many times the golden dog would stand off to the side, by the stove or by the fridge, watching the proceedings with rapt attention and seemingly willing food morsels to drop with his mental visualizations. He was successful in his telekinesis experiments more often than not, and always gave an appreciative wag of his tail in return. His second meal of the day came in the mid-afternoon, sandwiched in between his Mom's appointments and a list of things-to-do. But he would be back in the kitchen for supper preparation, again hoping for something to drop to assuage any hunger pangs that might crop up before breakfast time the following morning. Bud was a true gentleman as his parents ate their dinner, retreating a respectable distance to snooze and keeping a half-eye out for any developments. But when he heard the final clink of cutlery on chinaware, he would jump up and come over to his parents for a chin rub and a pat on the head before he headed away for an early bedtime.

Splish-Splash, I was Taking a Bath



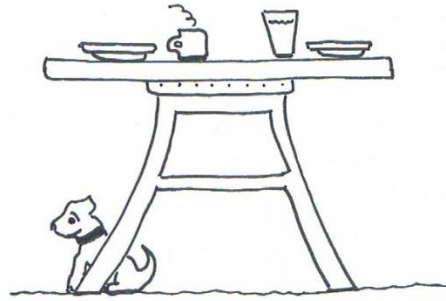
Buddy had always been spiffed up at a professional groomers when he lived in California, and this continued on periodically in his new life in Canada. But every now and then his Dad would scoop him up and take him down for a bath in the mud sink in the downstairs laundry room. His little heart would pound with excitement, and his big eyes would bulge even wider when the hot spray of water his body. But as the dog shampoo got worked into his fur he would relax, and would stand patiently while all the sudsy foam got washed down the sink. Then he would be popped into a rough orange towel, and scruffed and rubbed to within an inch of his life. The bath experience always excited him, and after being carried upstairs he started to rip around the living room and dining room at breakneck speed. He would pause intermittently to lick his paws in a futile attempt to dry them, and then he would be off, going madly in all directions. His Jack Russell heritage allowed him to jump like Michael Jordan, landing on the top of the Reiki table in one effortless scaling, then rubbing his nose and whiskers along the blanket to dry off just a little bit more. After one of these rough baths, his Dad grabbed him and slipped on a green bandana that they had saved from the groomers. Camera shots were snapped of the little golden cowpoke, buffed and polished like a photography shoot model.

About Town



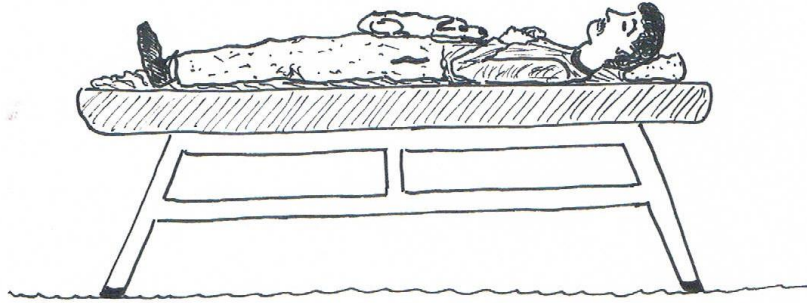
Buddy went for two walks every day, as he was the kind of dog who refused to do his business in his own backyard. But every now and then he would go out on a special excursion that would let him see new things and see more of his new hometown. His absolute favourite outing was to go with his Mom to the special pet store, Bark N Fitz. They were located right in the old downtown core, and had all manner of dog food and dog treats for owners to buy for their furry children. Buddy would strain at his leash as soon as he went in the door, as the range and quality of smells drove him absolutely bananas. Ellen, the kind young store clerk, would graciously allow Buddy to go off-leash. He proceeded to tear around the store, going from corner to corner, sniffing all the bags of dog food. One time he even snuck into the back storage area, finding a treat on the ground and nosing under a metallic pail and turning it over with a resounding clang. Buddy was kindly ushered out of the back room by Ellen, and was even given a second treat as an inducement to get leashed up for the return trip home. A few weeks later, Buddy went on a weekend car ride to the university, where he trotted down quiet hallways to his Dad's academic office. He sat on a chair and patiently watched his Papa grade engineering capstone design reports, leaning in for a pat each time a page was turned on one of the reports. His stomach rumbled around the same time as his Dad's, and he was glad to see the reports getting packed up before they returned home for dinner and a well-earned early bedtime.

Patio Culture



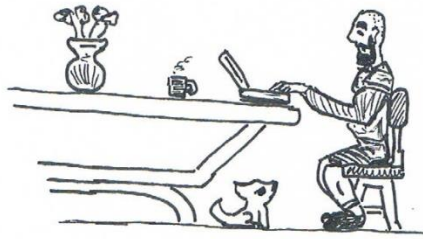
As the weather got warmer, life in Canada became even more enjoyable for the golden dog from the Golden State. His parents took him along for a few longer jaunts, where they would have lunch on a patio bathed in sunshine. The rules of having a dog at a restaurant patio seemed to vary from place to place. At the Mulberry on James Street North, he would be snuck in a side gate and avoided detection as his parents went in one by one for food, and the other patrons seemed bemused by the little guy loitering under the table waiting for a scrap to fall. At One Duke on James Street South, things seemed a little looser and the waitress even brought out a strip of bacon and fed Buddy in small pieces while he licked his lips. And one Sunday the little trio went up to Elora for a day trip, and settled into the patio outside Cork on the main drag of the tourist town. The kind waitress loved dogs and brought Buddy a dish of water, followed by a slice of high-end *paté*. He had never eaten this before but the taste reminded him of the beef brisket he had been so graciously served by the chef near the pier in Huntington Beach. Not all of Buddy's rides were related to food. He would sometimes go out in the car for hikes with his Mom in the Dundas Valley. One time they hiked for an hour and a half and were on the verge of being lost, but a call back to his Dad at home put them on the right course. Buddy strode on, short legs and all, eager to prove his credentials as an intrepid explorer.

A Life of Leisure



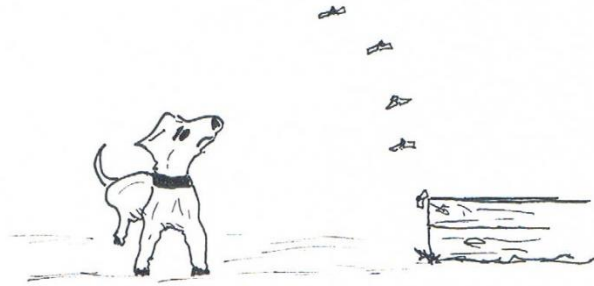
But for the most part, the little golden pooch hung around inside the old red brick home on Park Street West. He didn't go downstairs as the stairs were a bit too steep, and he was generally forbidden to go upstairs after he had a number of paper-chewing incidents in the den office on the second floor. So this meant he largely spent his day in the front living room, dining room, kitchen or the back TV room. The kitchen was hard-surfaced and the only attraction was food drawn to the floor by the welcome presence of gravity. But the other three rooms were filled with soft surfaces for sleeping and resting, and little Buddy had many tuffet options in each to relax. He always slept quite shallowly, with an open eye and cocked ear at the ready to hear of a walk opportunity or any scraping of a pot or pan. He also loved the Reiki table, scaling its considerable height with great ease and nudging into the furrows of its soft blankets. He would sometimes sit upright and put his paws on his parents if they came to lay down on the table, giving them Reiki and Love in a quiet and unbroken stream. Buddy was a wee mystery man, almost a shapeshifter. He would be seen out in the living room, up comfortably on a pillow. The next second he was back on the IKEA chair in the TV room, seemingly popping in and out of these favourite places without having to walk through the kitchen, moving himself with his intention and within the blink of an eye.

Family Ties



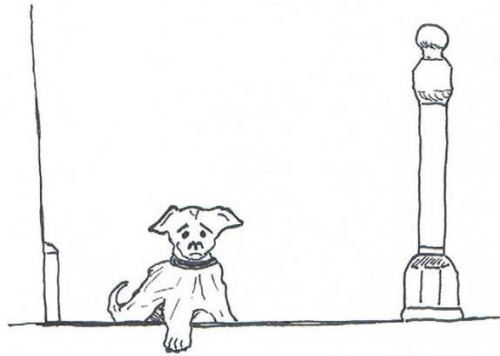
Buddy had come to his family in California from the pound, and very quickly became the dog of the house and the furry son of his California Momma. To the Canadian visitors, this made him a brother or an uncle in the family tree, depending on the generation. But since his arrival in Canada and integration into a new family dynamic, the brother now became the furry son and the uncle now became the furry brother. His new sister would take beautiful photographs and videos of him playing or lounging around, and specialized in getting right down to Buddy's level and capturing the world from his perspective. The new sister got married to this lovely guy named Joe, who liked to play with the golden dog and make funny air-hissing sounds out of the side of his mouth. One Summer they came to stay for 40 days while moving households, and the little pup had a steady source of amusement over that whole happy interval of time. His "brother", a budding filmmaker in Toronto, initially didn't like to be referred to as Buddy's brother. He had a very special relationship with Rocky, the family's original dog, and felt he could be a brother to only one dog even though Rocky had gotten his angel wings. So the 'cousin' term was adopted, a friendly but slightly detached label that would do for now. But Buddy would sit by his feet, expectant eyes looking upward and waiting for a pat or a chin rub, and hoping that someday he just might earn his *bona fide* furry brother status.

Curse of the Pollinators



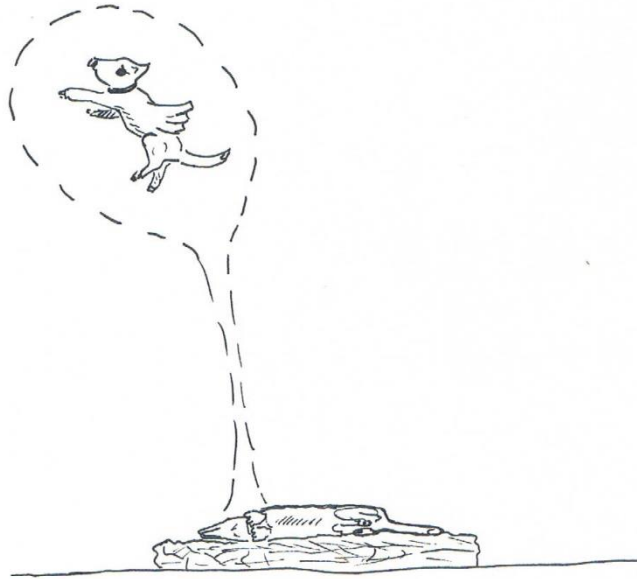
Life went on, in a fun tumble of walks, treats and sitting as a trio with his parents and watching old episodes of Frasier. Holidays came and went, laughter rang out and tears were sporadically released, but on the whole things went well for the little golden mutt and his doting parents. But one Summer day he was out on a walk, and stepped too close to a timber post that housed a small beehive. In an instant, one of the tiny creatures sank its stinger into Mister Buddy. He started to limp and then went a bit lame, not recovering until a quick trip to the vet and a needle of antihistamine. Life went on well after that first bee bite, but a year or more later he was out on a short hike on a late Sunday afternoon. They were near Spencer Creek, in an area with lots of greenery and open space. One minute Buddy was walking along well, and the next minute he let out a heart-wrenching shriek and fell flat to the ground. The poor dog was like an inner tube with its air sucked out of it; nearly two-dimensional as he lay writhing on the grass. His Mom started to run the seven blocks homeward to where an antihistamine capsule might save the little lad. His Dad awkwardly picked Buddy up as he felt like rolled-out cookie dough, and kept slipping through his arms. When he tried to run he almost dropped him; so he jumped out in front of a car and asked the kind young driver to zip them home. They picked up the sprinting Momma along the way, but Buddy lay sprawled across his Dad's lap with a strange glazed look in his eyes. Once at home, they forced the capsule down his gullet and applied their hands to his head and prayed. Over the next ten minutes Buddy slowly roused, coming back one inch at a time from some internal precipice. His tummy shook and quivered, as he tried to expunge the bee sting poison from his system. Another trip to the emergency vet was needed, and a kind doctor checked him over and pronounced that the doggie could go home. But there was something in the doctor's eyes, a sadness and a knowing, that didn't escape the attention of the parents.

Sleeping Arrangements



The days were pretty much the same—mealtimes, walks, lounging around the house. But when darkness fell and it was time for bed, something had changed in Buddy's psyche after he had been inflicted with the second bee sting. Before he would sleep here and there on the main floor, on a favourite chair or carpet, or on top of a soft sweater or coat if it had been left on a surface that he could jump up to. But now he seemed a little nervous, or scared even, of sleeping alone. He would come up the wooden stairs around midnight, his paw nails tapping out a steady beat as he took it one stair at a time. Buddy would then stand around at the foot of his parents' bed, hoping for an invitation to jump up and nestle in under the blankets with the rest of his wolfpack. Sometimes he slept on his second pooch pad in the little nook next to his Dad's side of the bed. The little golden lad snored now and again which would wake up his Dad intermittently throughout the night. To counter this, Bud was moved into the clothes closet area of the master bedroom, just around the corner under his Dad's hanging sweaters but still within earshot and with a strong heart connection as they all slumbered away. But on nights with thunderstorms, and there were many that Spring, the arcing electricity would awaken Buddy and he would pace nervously around the bedroom. To allow at least one parent to sleep normally, Dad would whisk Buddy off to the guest room and fitfully get back to sleep in between lightning bursts and the resultant shaking of the little dog's body. Buddy would even try to sit on his Dad's head during these storms, in some kind of valiant attempt to protect him. On the days following a storm, the parents and their doggie looked out at the world with somewhat droopy eyelids and a hope for calmer weather.

The Final Chapter



Little Buddy was trying to put on a happy face and get through each day, but something seemed to be holding him back from being his usual bright-eyed self. His folks took him back to the emergency vet one night when he just wouldn't stop coughing, and a chest x-ray confirmed everyone's greatest fears. The dog who loved with all his heart had an enlarged heart, perhaps twice the size of normal for a doggie of his breed. He was put on a medication, and then another, but the tipping point came when Mary asked if the little guy was perhaps getting too much food. His belly was getting big, but not from overeating, as his appetite had gone way down with the medications. It was fluid backing up from his heart and lungs, and it kept getting a little worse each day. His Dad picked up Buddy and put an ear to his furry chest, and the strange sounds coming from his heart sounded like the banging and clanging from a metal echo chamber. Walking became tough, especially in the heat, and it was a particularly early Summer that year. Jumping up anywhere was out of the question, and even getting comfortable enough to sleep became challenging because of his roly-poly tummy. The parents hung on, hoping for a miracle, as they loved the little guy to bits. But then they felt the knowing that dog owners sense when their little ones are not well and that it's not going to get any better. The vet was scheduled to come to their home in four days' time, and they spent those days holding and petting Buddy and letting him know how much he meant to them. The transition was sweet and swift, and Buddy's brother up in Toronto felt him strongly during his meditation that day. The little guy flew high into the Light, no longer held back by his illness or even the memory of any bee stings. He was now a golden angel, pretty much what he had been all of his entire life.

~the end~

Photo Gallery



Buddy was an old soul...



A rocking chair provided no challenge for his leaping abilities....



He would wait on the ridge of the sofa while his Dad was out on a long run...



But his main purpose was to lounge around the house and look cute...