

Derek Atencio

Professor Wood

ENGL 1301

Sept. 25, 2017

Auburn Fur

The long standing societal concerns that occur on the Native American reservations is an established civic issue, with many turning to drugs and petty crime. Growing up in an impoverished area, there is an almost constant devil's advocate given few natural economic opportunities. Add in the fact that education is an inconsistently funded project, and it's a cocktail of brewing societal downward trends. With that in mind, my mom brought an auburn poodle puppy home, telling me that I could keep her, but that I would have to learn the responsibility needed to properly care for her. While the common tales of freedom from long term responsibility had been spouted in my ears more than once, one look at the goofy grin on the canine's face, a hug of wooly soft fur, and I would have agreed to any terms set.

From the get go it was a learning experience, the hurricane of energy that existed within such a diminutive form served to both be a beacon of inspiration when I was down, and the ultimate test of patience when Daisy decided it was time to do anything no matter how tired and weary I was. I recall one time after seeing the film *Treasure Planet*, I had decided, no longer needed education for a good career, but that Daisy and I would strike it rich finding some pirate's gold, ignorant to the fact that the very much land locked state of Oklahoma was probably not very high on any corsair's list to hide treasure. The lesson was taught when my mom found us in the fields between home and school, exhausted, encrusted in earthen mud, and encircled by recently excavated pits. The scolding I received was harsh enough, but the desperate pleas from

Daisy jailed in her rarely used crate broke my resolve. In the evening as the news reported a robbing turned shooting at the local gas station, my mom turned to me. I had been lucky today; actions affect those around us. Just like the friend of culprit who was charged for conspiracy despite claims of knowing the situation as helping a pal out by driving them to a job interview, I had haphazardly marched Daisy and myself into potential rattlesnake territory.

Though her auburn fur may have faded like the pages of a well-read book, Daisy would remain my constant companion. We got in trouble, traveled, did nigh everything together. We were so practically inseparable, that even after being given a battered and bruised rustic pickup truck, I walked to and from school so that she could be seen sitting there waiting for me as I entered our housing area. Another important life lesson I learned from my time with Daisy came in the form of respecting differences with people. It is with mixed amusement and embarrassment that I recall the disaster of a first date, the poor young woman's in the back seat of the truck face was as swollen and red as a tomato. I had never even considered that someone could be allergic to the fur storm stirred up with the intensity of one of the local sandstorms by the AC with Daisy in the passenger seat. While I learned to be more conscious of others, it was with stricter testing and proper introductions to Daisy that dictated that aspect of my social life for a good time to come.

As our time grew, Daisy continued to fade, though remained a constant warm and comforting presence. No longer could her long and lanky legs carry her on all of our adventures, but we were able to enjoy many new things as my grades steadily improved with more time spent home studying. Finally only a year or so ago, Daisy decided she had but one final lesson to bestow on me. Unable to jump, walking shakily, and barely able to eat, her cerulean eyes told me it was time. She had lived as my constant companion for nearly the entirety of my life, but it was

time to say goodbye. We spent a day revisiting our old stomping grounds, watching old films that had fueled our previous adventures, and allowing her to help herself to whatever of my food she wanted. The next day with a shattered being I gave my mom the go ahead to sign the vet papers, and my other half was whisked away. I learned that day to put others before your own wants. That when I love something, it is important to do what is best for them, even if it wasn't the best for me.

Looking back now my Mom apologizes for some of her sterner moments; the antics Daisy and I got into were never within the same tier as what other youth I grew up with wound up spiraling into. But I always smile and shrug it off. What she thought of as a potential tool to keep me out of trouble wound up also growing into helping define me. I recalled the danger I led Daisy into, and I make sure my nephew is buckled securely in my car. I recall the poor girl who never spoke to me again, and offer sympathy even when I fail to understand the pains another goes through. I recall agreeing to allow Daisy to be set free from the problems of the mortal coil, and I am strong enough to share and laugh, to encourage reaching for dreams, and to let go when they are reached.