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Dog Years

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of conservative voters; when,
dropped by an atrophied arm,
the stainless steel pot clatters
to the kitchen floor, and long after
the ritual of mail delivery
has ceased its comforting
punctuation, and after the fine ash
of incinerated trash has filmed
the school windows — those who
have strength will push open their doors
and send out their suffering dogs.

Those dogs will glance nervously
over their shoulders as they descend
the sagging porch steps beside
the basket of curling geraniums,
wagging their tails in the wan hope

characteristic of their species
(so long accustomed to the sound
of our languages over their heads),
but who will begin soon to fend
for themselves, to form a better government,
a more perfect union, with a pure code
constructed of growls, more suited
to the new world — *the world*
of accelerated mutation that will be
their inheritance. To forget us
will take them less than a generation.