1999

3 A.M.: Put Pedro to Sleep

Dana Roeser

Follow this and additional works at: http://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation

Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.5149
3 A.M.: **Put Pedro to Sleep**

I know exactly what death looks like

- downy hills pale green
- tufts of cottonwood trees
- ribbon of road, ribbon of river.

The needle, long and shiny. . . .

Her breath rises and I feel for it. She’s small.

**During the apneas**

- the little pauses
- she might drift as on a hang glider
- over that landscape.

I almost pushed him down

- the cliff
- on Canyon Road
- on his last day today

I thought about it

**Pedro, companion**

- of my loneliness
- my solitary glides, at night,
- over those hills.
Why do they call it

putting to sleep?

At night
we turn ourselves over to God.

In the spring on the first warm hot days

that force the buds open

force purple-scented lilac
from dun-leaved bushes

people want
to feel the sun and air again.

They take off their shirts

then,
their heads

with a gun, with. . . .

My baby and I keep our shirts on,

stay on this side.

Pedro scrabbles up the edge
across the stones
    in rapid water.

Pedro, ball of will
    and bites,
  wagging his white-tipped tail
    when he comes to me.

He’ll be put to sleep.

    At first, his rest will be very dark;
    then, wisps of dawn
      will fill the house;
    he’ll scratch to be let out
    his black and brown tank-shaped body
      will trot down the sidewalk
    his toenails will click
      his collar will jingle
  an hour later
    he’ll return from Smith’s
    as he does
      every morning
  from scrounging the dumpster
with a whole roast chicken

a dozen spareribs raw or cooked

a freshly baked loaf of bread
    still in its cellophane...