Dog Days by Bruce Meyer

Tell them a dog wrote this poem by banging on the keys.
Her paws started scratching as if she were scratching fleas.
I merely cleaned it up afterward. It needed an edit.
*Woof*, it began, or something like it. To her credit, she got a few words right, though she spells as she please.

So begins “A Comedy of Terriers”, and the subtitle of *Dog Days*, a short sweet book by Barrie’s Bruce Meyer. I liked this book so
much, I wanted to hug it. When my wife Lisa and I traveled to Algonquin Park in September, we had great fun reading it aloud.

We are not alone in our appreciation for this little gem – part of Black Moss’ 64/10 series – 64 pages of poetry for $10 – it is now in its 5th printing and has been featured by Bob Chelmick on Alberta’s CKUA radio gaining Meyer new fans.

Sweet as this book is, there is not a “cute” bone in the treat jar here. Meyer is a formalist and a damned good one. He’s also an accomplished English professor as demonstrated in the book’s concept, varied forms and elevated language. Structured as a comedy in three acts, *Dog Days* is a kennelful of kyrielles, ballades, mirror
poems, sonnets, rondeau, free verse, terz rima, debat, rondeau and more.

His poems range from downright funny to sober meditations on love, language and our very souls. In “O Canidae”, Meyer writes,

The dog in the wolf howls at the moon because the night is over far too soon and under the cover of fanged darkness the pines bear winter but cannot confess to the silent ghost in their ghostly tune.

I’m writing this on the eve of All Hallow’s Eve. Watching the news on television, we seem not so far removed from our early ancestors. And outside, a neighbour’s dog bays at a feral cat that screams back at him, and hair ripples on my neck in primordial fear. Meyer understands both howl and fear.
In his introduction, he notes this is less a book about dogs, although they play a part in every poem, than about how dogs lead us to the world. And to the soul that dogs us all the days of our lives. Dogs are not far from the wolf, nor are we, Meyer reminds us.

He lists Pablo Neruda and Czeslaw Milosz among his influences. While Meyer’s poems owe much to the English canon, they open out on a contemporary world.

Dog Days - A Comedy of Terriers is a home-grown classic from one of our best small presses and a gifted, industrious writer. Dog-lovers or not, readers will find pleasure in Bruce Meyer’s musings, beautiful language and rich quotations. Reading Dog Days is like spending a cosy
evening in front of the fireplace with a genial English professor – and his dog.

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