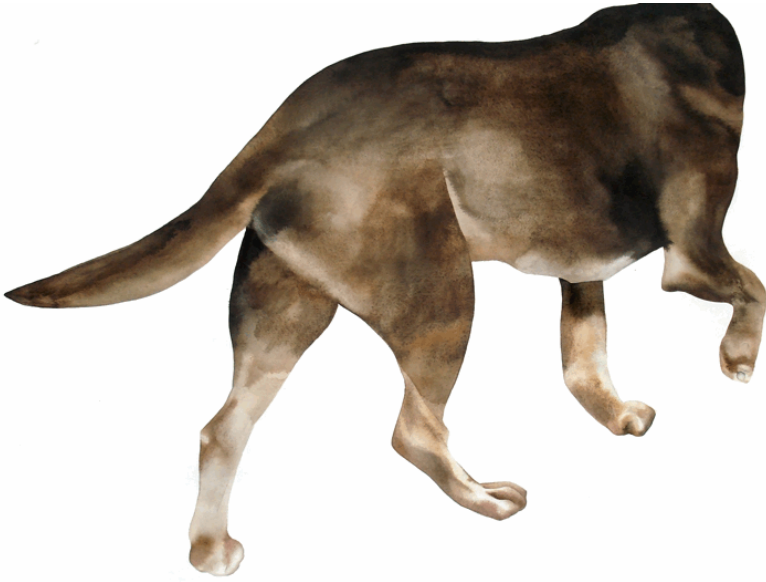


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# THE DOGS OF CHELSEA

Mathias Svalina



1.

**I cut my first dog in half to find out what was hidden. My second dog was a wristbone I'd hidden below the bed. After that there was a series of dogs, each one jumping its fences or digging its way out of nightmares. In the kitchen the dog's claws rattle the linoleum.**

2.

**These dogs too, came from overseas. Double the dose of the painkiller. Hand a manual of suffering to each passer-by with plastic eyes. Look directly into the camera lens for the entire day. It is vermin & it carries disease, yet I cannot help my sympathy.**

3.

Tyranny is new, but it is your best friend. It is the tyranny of breeding. The chalk marks on the street, like glass buildings in their winking, intend to humiliate. It is the tyranny of diamonds & crusts. The tyranny of the fathers & all the other neighbors. It is the flapping piece of paper stuck below the wiper of the shiny Mercedes Benz.

4.

A dog must be killed, singed, cooked & eaten as a sacrifice or the coins will return into metal. A dog must be killed by decapitation in order to extract the proper returns on investment. This is the advice you receive from the manual. This is real fur I feel beneath my fingers. When my father put the dog's head back onto the dog he stopped coughing up the blood & was cured.

5.

I see a headless dog enter a room & sit down patiently. and then I see its tail walk into the room like a grotesque inchworm. It was the best Halloween costume I'd ever seen. It told me everything I needed to know about urbanity & cinema. I am old now & nearly at my end. Here is my camera—you must do the filming. Here are the bones that lead to my heart.

6.

Dogs dream of human bones. Dogs dream of human bones that walk with hunched & twisted backs. Do you choose a dog or its master? It is the tyranny of context. The tyranny of red buildings, brown buildings, glass buildings, all reflected in the still pools of rainwater from which the pigeons sip.

7.

**We walk in circles around the dead dog because our stomachs are weak. We are wearing birchbark masks & betting sugar pound for pound against tin. The wolf gave the dog the right to snatch food from men. That is why wolves kill dogs in the streets.**

8.

**A dried up dog is kept in a box by the hero. When the hero is killed, his widow takes out the dog, which comes to life, collects the bones, howls over them, & the hero revives. The last dog I had became me & when it had me, it dreamt of my bones until I had bones.**

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# THE DOGS OF CHELSEA 2

Mathias Svalina



1.

**This dog is made of rain & coated in acrylic. Another metaphor is the stain that remains when the body washes away. I have named her Schatze, which is German for “understanding is part of the treatment.”**

2.

**This dog rose from the earth like the body ejecting a remnant of glass from the pad of the thumb. I lay the dog face down in the dirt & watch its parts creak loosely like an old wooden chair that has been sat upon by the same person for many decades while that person grew fatter & fatter. I have named her Schatze, German for “like a hospital.”**

3.

A dog always returns to the scene of its imminence, to the curled-up rug that it has bitten into being. A dog creates the owner by being trapped inside the house & when the food runs out the dog is no longer a dog, but an error of intention.

4.

The resale value of a dog depends on its original intent & the nature of its current conditioning. One dog can be larger, stronger & smarter than another dog, but the other dog can still be larger, stronger & smarter. My parents were both dogs of equal proportions, but when they died I became very small with a harrowing howl.

5.

This dog is made of truck exhaust & must step gingerly over the subway grates. It is suspended in the concept of complementarity, how the green leaves feel in relation to the strawberry's seeds. This dog is infested with millions of weevils & must continue running to sustain its shape. I have named her Schatze, which is German for "sweetheart."

6.

A dog's shape is everything to a dog, just as time is everything to a watch. A dog must be accepting of every possible framing. Near the burning building near the river. Near the statue tipped into the river.

7.

**A man without a dog is a man with his original paint job. A parent without a child is not like a child without a parent. The parent without a child must hold the railing when she or he walks up the stairs. For the child without a parent there are only stairs in the stairwell.**

8.

**This dog is beginning to rot. It has been dead for decades. I have named it Schatze, which is German for “what I could have believed in.” I have named it Schatze, which is German for “I will return to the house of my youth” or “I will not return to the house of my youth.”**

9.

**The statue tipped into the river continues to whimper & squirm. It remembers the stairwells of its youth with their blue carpets. It remembers the sounds the steps made creaking when a parent walked up them & the sound of soft thudding when a dog ran up them. These sounds remain when the body washes away.**