

CAGE-PIECE (previously unpublished)
Artie Gold (1947 - 2007)

A friend of mine has a large dog
who has rather an appetite for cats.

Alas
there is no reconciling this appetite.
If it's your cat the dog eats;
that friend apologizes, explains:
The dog eats cats, that's that.
There is nothing he can do
until the dog has finished eating the cat.

Now this friend of mine
a while back met, well, I guess you could say
met his true love.

Soon they had decided
going from one apartment to another,
sleeping over, two rents -
the situation favoured their moving
both into the same apartment, sharing lives.

Alas
a possession of the friend's true love was a cat.

Now the friend had lived with the dog as man and dog.
The friend's true love had lived with her cat a long time
and grown too fond of that cat
to consider getting rid of it.

One ridiculous solution occurred to me
that the friend's true love could feed her cat
to her true love's dog, thus lightening baggage.
That solution did not occur to them.

They sought to work with other opportunities.
These clearly could not have either
sacrifice his or her pet to the other's behalf
for this would be a terrible way
to move into a mutual marriage,
one not based on sacrifice
so much as sharing.

Families are based on sacrifice.
Are inherited.
You do with them what you can.
Often an imbalance leaves the son or daughter
with a parent.
A parent discarded from a couple
death has broken up by discarding half.

It was decided
that one half of the day,
half,
to be fair to the other pet,

to be fair to the other person,
would be set aside for the cat,
one half set aside for the dog.

Alas

there was only one really good living space
and the time not spent in that space
would be spent in a closet.

now

if the dog ever got loose,
essentially, that would be it for the cat.

Unless,

and only unless
that cat could get to where the dog was kept
to keep it apart while the cat was everywhere else.
same way if the cat got loose,
obviously
it would find itself in with the dog.

and that is the way
they go into the marriage.

so far
the cat has not seen the dog

except
those times each day
both are held struggling
the one trying to eat the other,
the other trying to flee the eater.

I wait.

there is a long time.
something will happen.

the couple
grows closer
and closer
daily.

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