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## Dogfight

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## Dogfight

[For Miss Jennifer]

Dogs are secretly delighted at the prospect  
of witnessing a cat argument.  
Dogs station themselves on grey cement porch  
landings;  
press against silver-chalky chainlink  
indelibly marking glossy trimmed coats  
with crazed irregular diamonds;  
strain at frayed hemp that tethers collar-encircled necks  
to heavy iron spikes  
pounded  
into hardpacked earth;  
peer through gaps  
in weathered-board fences, forepaws  
braced  
and shoulders stiffened,  
glad for the heated air.

Dogs wait, watch, wag  
(sometimes tails, sometimes tongues),  
triangular ears perked, poised for the  
first hiss,  
yellow eyes shining with insane vicarious envy, eager for the  
first unsheathed claw.

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Strategists all,  
dogs hunker, whisper:

*That black one she'd better look out she'll get it good  
have to run off in a hurry hide sleep under a thick-leaved bush*

*That orange tabby she's mean she'll strike quick  
draw bright thin blood mat fur she wants scratches gashes to  
fester ache*

*Just awful awful devil cats splitting our peace in pitchy shrieks*

Dogs bark growl howl yawp snap pant;  
but always, always  
dogs testify later  
with a sober dignity, proof  
of canine superiority,  
disdain  
for such indecent  
and uncivil events  
as cat arguments.