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## On Our Dog's Birthday

Jack Ridl

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## On Our Dog's Birthday

Jack Ridl

Throughout the day,  
he'll press his wet nose  
against the floor to ceiling  
window and watch anything  
that passes by, now and  
then falling asleep. When  
the cats come in, they'll  
nuzzle their cold faces  
against the soft warmth  
of his forehead. We'll  
also look into the day,  
watch the thick gray  
beech trees' branches  
sway in the coming  
winter storm. Today  
our dog is ten. When  
we go to another room,  
he'll follow. When later  
we take our walk, he will  
wander off after smells  
he finds along the way.  
After we return, if I toss  
his ragged stuffed lion,  
he'll look at me, seem  
to want to say, "You  
don't have to play with me.  
I'm fine," then mosey  
over, and take the toy  
back to his spot. Tonight,  
if he needs to go out, he  
will sit by the side of the bed,  
my wife and I sleeping deep

in our marriage, and woof  
softly, clear his throat,  
as if he doesn't want to be a bother.