

NOTES

Told through a series of canine voices, Jake Barton's first collection of poetry introduces us to a variety of dog breeds. With humor and warmth, Barton allows each dog to have his day—or rather *say*—as to why he ended up in the most feared place for our canine friends: the dog pound. This collection of poems may be performed by a male or female and should be entered in Poetry Interpretation. Vocally, these poems present a smorgasbord for the performer adept at creating a myriad of characters. Really analyze and nail the variety of dialects found within these heartwarming poems. Obviously, the Irish Setter would benefit by using an Irish dialect. The French Poodle would best be served by using a French accent. Some of the poems allow the performer to be creative. The Bulldog could perhaps be presented using a voice similar to a Bronx, New York accent. Also, physically consider the breed as you add gestures and/or various stances. Do any of the dogs have fleas? Perhaps one randomly barks throughout his story. The key to the success of this presentation lies within the performer's ability to vocally distinguish each canine and tell each dog's story with the proper tone. The variety within each poem is what makes this collection of poems so special. Play the humor! Play the warmth! Play the moments! Giving each dog a somewhat humanistic quality makes each story that much more fun or compelling for the audience. If a manuscript is used in performance, each poem should be placed on a separate page for a more polished presentation.

The Irish Setter

Frank McCourt can babble all he wants.
Let him go on and on about his miserable Irish childhood.
Let him commiserate about his drunken father.
How his 'Da drank away his wages and was always searching for work.
I'm Irish, too.
Me owner would make McCourt's Da' look like Ozzie Nelson!
As a wee pup, I watched me owner stumble in from the pubs.
Looking back, I suppose me barking hello was too much
For the man whose only concern at the time
Was how to nurse his hangover.
He'd sit me outside, which was fine with me.
I'm an Irish Setter, after all.
Sitting is what we do best.
Besides, I liked looking up at the stars.

They make no noise, the stars.
It's so noisy in here.
Everybody's yapping away,
Yet not a single word is spoken.
I remember me Da' used to tell me,
"A silent muzzle is the sweetest sound to hear."
Most of the dogs in here, they get depressed.
Me? I'm just biding me time.
I'll be adopted soon. I know I will.
It's as the saying goes,
"If you're lucky enough to be Irish,
Then you're lucky enough."

The Alaskan Husky

I'm an Alaskan Husky.
My *ancestors* came from Alaska.
I'm originally from *Ohio*,
So enough with the Sarah Palin jokes!
Okay?
You can talk about sledding,
Shedding,
You can even talk about the latest
In dog bedding,
But I beg you!
No more Sarah Palin jokes!

The Bulldog

I've always found it insulting
When people say, "Everything's gone to the dogs."
There are many advantages to being a dog.
I can reach anything that itches.
I can scratch any itch in public, and no one is offended.
I don't need any expensive entertainment center either.
Throw me a bone or an old shoe,
And I can entertain myself for hours.
I can pass gas, and people will think it's cute.
No one ever expects me to pay for lunch or dinner.
I don't have to worry about table manners,
And if I gain weight, it's someone else's fault.

Have you ever heard the saying, "Lost as a goose?"
That's what the young man said to his friend when they found me.