

WINNER OF THE
2017 MANUSCRIPTS
POETRY CONTEST
WITH
ALESSANDRA LYNCH

CHLOE SELL

The Puppies



Poetry Contest Winner

Two puppies lay at my feet.
One brindle and striped like a tiger
The female is a lovely gray. It is she
that is striking. Her face so small, her legs like flappers.
she would be a beautiful dancer, but
how frightened of every little sound!
I took her out to the front yard and she heard wind chimes
and skirted back to the door—I took them out together once
til two pit bulls barked
and Luna dived under a parked
car.
The first time
I coaxed her out with a treat. “Come here, baby.”
The second time, “Get the fuck out of that car!”

anonymous 231 said a man grabbed her privates on a subway
(why do we use that word... 'privates'...they are not private)
i was grabbed
he grabbed me
a schoolmate grabbed me in a classroom. In class.
30 people stood, all in groups, chatting
uncomfortably. I can't remember what I did. Why this boy
 laughed and reached out and touched—
cupped
 no—

eah!

I yelped.

Potty training is better. I must softly pet them every
 time they go outside
 or they'll forget themselves and pee inside.
They've done it often. Tejunio will worry his eyes at me
 and meander
to the door sometimes. I tried to rub his nose in it, and
 he bucked like a wild horse. Like I'd beaten him.

Women envision strange things:

A woman fantasizes she's in love and gets married and has a thousand babies while juggling a career.

A woman fantasizes she is on a cruise ship and there is a murder and only she can solve it.

Occasionally a woman fantasizes she's at home. Cooking. Or on the street, or at a frat house. And a man approaches her. A nondescript white man, age 22-30.

A lewd request. A reaching out to touch.

She whips out her gun and shoots him dead like Butch Cassidy or John Wayne.

And the blood and the police come and she says breathlessly *I'd rather go to prison than be Raped!* And the jury acquits the brave young heroine.

But the boy's last name was Cho. He wasn't older. I couldn't find my gun.

Puppies
are doing well. They
follow me, they
drink when I drink, watch
me use the bathroom,
eat each other's meals,
chew up all my furniture
and sprawl on my bed. Luna loves
belly rubs. She spreads her legs and shows the world

I call it her 'teepee'
because it looks like a little Indian hut.

I fight this strange urge to touch it—
but my hand disgusts.

I can't remember how they neuter females.