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Summer

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••SUMMER

JUDY BLUNT

The neighbor's puppy ate my corn through the chain link fence this afternoon. It was not quite ripe. No, I am calm. Really.

When I first observed this through the window, I was folding towels and stacking them on the dryer. He was snagging ears through the wire by the silks, shucking them with his teeth as he went. For a second I fought the urge to not be calm at all---a closer inspection proved he had grazed the entire crop, a paltry crop of four ears, but a western Montana summer's worth and hard won. In the end, I remained calm. Very calm. It was, I reasoned, a bit late to yell, and hell, he doesn't know his name anyway. So I just sat on the back step and searched for meaning.

Had a cigarette, considered a beer.

Had a beer, considered another. Searched some more.

Rowan and Martin's Laugh In did a take-off on the search for higher purpose called the Perch for Higher Surface. I used their model. Events like this must have a higher purpose, or they are what? Simple chaos? Complex destruction? No, in many pleasant and similar perches with neighbors, I've learned there is at least one Good Reason for every doggie deed done on this block. Often there are several. Dogs, it seems are profoundly sensitive to all sorts of environmental and emotional storms, though perhaps that is an adult trait. This one crunches and drools, oblivious, absorbed, cobs and all. A Border Collie pup, still doughy with youth. His name is Tucker, though as I said, he is cheerfully unaware of that. When he is finished, he is very full. Four ears would not have gone once around my table, yet his belly thuds like a keg when he flops down.

We are all extremely, intensely calm at this point. I croon him a little song through the worthless fence. Consider a cigarette. Finish my beer. His sleep is profound, as deep and twitchy as that small muscle near my right eye.

I am thinking: He will fatten on this corn.

I am thinking: The garlic has done well, and there are carrots in this plot and onions. From the pantry, small red potatoes, a bit of bay leaf.

I am thinking: One day soon I will have my corn.