

DAYS OF PIE AND COFFEE

A motorist once said to me,
and this was in the country,
on a country lane, a motorist
slowed his vehicle as I was
walking my dear old collie,
Sithney, by the side of the road,
and the motorist came to a halt
mildly alarming both Sithney and myself,
not yet accustomed to automobiles,
and this particular motorist
sent a little spasm of fright up our spines,
which in turn panicked the driver a bit
and it seemed as if we were off to a bad start,
and that's when Sithney began to bark
and the man could not be heard, that is,
if he was speaking or trying to speak
because I was commanding Sithney to be silent,
though, indeed I was sympathetic
to his emotional excitement.
It was, as I recall, a day of prodigious beauty.
April 21, 1932—clouds,
like the inside of your head explained.
Bluebirds, too numerous to mention.
The clover calling you by name.
And fields oozing green.
And this motorist from nowhere
moving his lips
like the wings of a butterfly
and nothing coming out,
and Sithney silent now.
He was no longer looking at us,
but straight ahead
where his election was in doubt.
“That's a fine dog,” he said.

“Collies are made in heaven.”
“Well, if I were a voting man I’d vote for you,” I said.
“A bedoozling day to be lost in the country, I say.
Leastways, I am a misplaced individual.”
We introduced ourselves
and swapped a few stories.
He was a veteran and a salesman
who didn’t believe in his product—
I’ve forgotten what it was—hair restorer,
parrot feed—and he enjoyed nothing more
than a day spent meandering the back roads
in his jalopy. I gave him directions
to the Denton farm, but I doubt
that he followed them, he didn’t
seem to be listening, and it was getting late
and Sithney had an idea of his own
and I don’t know why I am remembering this now,
just that he summed himself up by saying
“I’ve missed too many boats”
and all these years later
I keep thinking that was a man
who loved to miss boats,
but he didn’t miss them that much.

This poem is a film treatment written for David Lynch by Jerome K. Jerome. I love that the narrator is doing very little, the motorist is barely doing anything, and Sithney the dog is forward-thinking and running for office.

- Corwin Ericson