

The Black Dog – by Joan Webster



“Cave Canem.”¹ “Beware of the Dog”. These words were written on the walls of the city of Pompeii, which on one clear, August day in 79 A.D. was buried under black lava, from Mt Vesuvius. It descended unexpectedly on a Roman city filled with activity and energy, and crushed the life out of that city. Pliny describes the day- “they were in darkness, blacker and denser than ordinary night.”² This is the theme of my history.

I am the Black Dog. I have descended from black dogs, far back into Antiquity. My ancestors have almost always been the same colour – black. I have had many other names in History and have come to the whistle of “Black Bile”, “Melancholia”, “Depression”, “Despair”, “Down”, “Misery”, “Hopelessness”, “Mood Disorder”, “Unipolar Disorder”, “Blue” and even “Hell.” I don’t mind what I am called. I will come to my Master or to my Mistress, and they do not ever call me. I am a Pariah Dog, not one that is loved for its affection and loyalty, like the Labrador, not one that is fluffy and cute, like the Poodle. I am an outsider that likes to slink up behind members of the human race, and torment them, and chew up their feelings of self worth, especially in the early hours of the morning. Every Dog has its day, it is said and every Black Dog has its Night.

I thieve these humans of their energy; I rob them of their self esteem and their appetite and make Death seem an easier alternative to living. I bite, gnaw and growl. My snarl causes people to panic, to lose concentration or to slow right down. I attack the young, the middle aged and the old, men and women. I am not a racist; anyone from any country will fit my jaws. I do not discriminate. I attack the rich and famous and the poor and obscure. Sometimes I am vicious, and sometimes I cower with my tail between my legs, but my bite is always cruel and can be lethal. I love to see sadness, pain, and hurt, and wag my black tail when I hear a person say “I don’t see any future” or “I have lost hope.” My Ancestors attacked the bile, the heart, the id, ego or superego, but nowadays we attack the brain, particularly the chemicals in the brain. Give me a good neurotransmitter, and I will salivate like Pavlov’s Dog.

One of the best descriptions of the Black Dog was written by Conan Doyle, a writer that one of my ancestors had attacked from time to time. He used my ferocious relative as a model in his famous book “The Hound of the Baskervilles”-

“A hound it was, an enormous coal, black hound, but not such a hound as mortal eyes have ever seen. Fire burst from its open mouth, its eyes glowed with a smouldering glare, its muzzle and hackles and dewlap were outlined in flickering flame. Never in the delirious dream of a disordered brain could anything more savage, more appalling, more

¹ **Cave Canem**- Latin for “Beware of the Dog” was written on a house found in the ruins of Pompeii. There is a mosaic of a fierce black dog, chained and alert and the words are written under his paws.

² **The Letters of the Younger Pliny**- Book 6-Penguin Classics page 166.

*hellish, be conceived than the dark form and savage face which broke upon us out of the wall of fog.”*³

You have asked for my History and so I will inform you of it. A long, long time ago, when the human species were new to this World, my Ancestor was a demon sent by supernatural forces to torment the humans. I was described in those far off days as a “*demon*” rather than a dog.⁴

The Hindus brought the idea of demon and dog together in the name “Rakshas” which means “*demon-dogs*.”⁵ The leader of the pack, Ravana had ten heads and twenty arms, copper coloured eyes and “*a crescent of teeth like the young moon*.”⁶ He represented the forces of evil. His colour was not yet described but his intent on attacking the human soul was already well established.

If I look further into my genealogy, a very early ancestor that is a kind of dog was the Egyptian jackal, Anubis, who guarded the Underworld and was closely associated with gloom and even with death. He was always portrayed as black with long pointed ears.^{7 8}

I have also found another early ancestor in Cerberus, the huge black Dog with between three to fifty heads who guarded the gates of Hell or the Greek Underworld. He welcomed those souls into a state of Eternal Suffering.⁹ Written on the doors he guarded were the words “*Abandon Hope all ye who Enter Here*.”¹⁰

These were my earliest, mythological and legendary ancestors, and although they varied a little in appearance, and their colour was not always specified, they were closely related to the dog family and they liked to attack the human species with cruelty and ferocity. They all guarded the Underworld, a place of darkness and of demons and they brought people into this Darkness. Some had many heads with many fangs, making them particularly horrifying.

I now move from legend to history to the man who is known as “The Father of Medicine”- Hippocrates. He did not give me the name “Black Dog”, but he called my ancestor “Black Bile”. Black, my colour has often been associated with evil, or night. We use the terms “Black Looks”, “Black Moods”. “Black Death “ Black List”, “Black Magic”, “ Black Mail”, “Black Mark” “Black Mass” ,“Blackout”. Not one of these names denotes anything positive or good. There was at that time a Greek belief that a howling dog would mean misfortune or death to a human.¹¹

³ **Conan Doyle**- The Hound of the Baskervilles-Octopus Books-1981- p 789.

⁴ www.com.au/anew/Canis Major. p2.

⁵ **ibid** p 2.

⁶ **Veronica Ions**- Indian Mythology-Hamlyn. London. P. 115.

⁷ **Oxford Classical Dictionary**-Clarendon Press, Oxford 1949.

⁸ www.touregypt.net.

⁹ **Oxford Classical Dictionary**- Clarendon Press, Oxford 1949

¹⁰ **Dante**- Inferno iii.9

¹¹ www.com.au/Canis Major p3

Hippocrates' theory was that a person who had too much black bile would suffer from Depression as too much "Black bile" would create an imbalance in the body. The Greek word for "Black" is "Melon" and "Cholia" was the Greek word for "Bile". Put that together and you come up with one of my many names "Melancholia". Although Hippocrates did not use the term "Black Dog", he did place importance on my Star - the "Dog Star", Sirius. The rising of this Star was connected with certain types of illness. If there was no rain under the Dog Star it was likely to lead to more "black bile" as the more fluid part of the bile is dried up while "*the denser and more bitter part is left behind.*"¹² Hippocrates said he could not heal during the month when the Dog Star rose. The Dog Star meant a time of "*scorching or burning*" which could affect the brain.

The Romans used the term "Dog Days" to describe the days when the Dog Star Sirius rises with the Sun. These days were thought to be particularly unhealthy days. There was a belief that when the Dog Star rose over the rim of the sea the dogs would become angry and all the inhabitants of the land would be filled with fear and hatred.¹³ This belief in the power of the Dog Star was to continue through history and I will refer to my star again as I reveal more of my History.

This idea was reflected in other early cultures, for example in the Parsee religion the Dog is also guardian of the Underworld. He guarded the bridge where souls were judged.¹⁴

In the Aztec tradition, Xoltl, the "God of Death" and the setting sun had a Dog's head.¹⁵ In China the dog, at night symbolized "*destruction, and catastrophe.*" The Chinese also depicted chaos in the shape of a huge shaggy dog.¹⁶

Aretaeus of Cappadocia who lived in the 3rd century wrote of the effects of being bitten by my ancestor-
*"Sufferers are dull or stern; dejected or unreasonably torpid...they also become peevish, dispirited, sleepless, and start up from disturbed sleep. Unreasonable fears may also seize them."*¹⁷

What a fine set of black curs my remote Ancestors were-!! torturing and tormenting the sleepless with endless anxieties. I hope I can live up to their fine standards. When a poet can write-

*"O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
May who ne'er hung there."*¹⁸

- I feel I am carrying on the torch of
black depression exceptionally well.

The Roman poet Horace said that the sight of a black dog with its pups was an unlucky omen.¹⁹ As I have a many black pups myself, I find this encouraging information. The

¹² **Hippocratic Writings** ed Lloyd- Pelican Classics-1978 p158

¹³ **Manilus –Astronomica Book 5** Quoted in www.com./Canis Major p4.

¹⁴ www.com.au/Canis Major p5. This bridge was known as Chinvat in the Parsee religion

¹⁵ **ibid** p3

¹⁶ **ibid** p3

¹⁷ **R.Porter-** Madness- A Brief History. Oxford 2002.

¹⁸ **Gerard Manly Hopkins-** Poems and Prose- Sonnet 42- Penguin Classics 1953 p 61

Romans followed Hippocrates view that my ancestor was “*Excessive Black Bile*” and this belief continued into the Middle Ages. Bartholomaeus Anglicus wrote “*they that suffer colerum nigram* (black bile if you have not studied Latin, as I have in the Doghouse) will “*dreameth dreadfull darke dreams.*”²⁰

There were legends of the black dog which was said to roam the English countryside from as far back as Viking times. One name for him was “Black Shuck”, which came from an Anglo-Saxon word “scucca” meaning “demon”. He was a “large black, hellhound, the size of a calf, with flaming eyes.”²¹ In the North of England he was known as Barghest, in Wales he was Gwyllgi “*a frightful apparition of a mastiff with baleful breath and blazing red eyes.*” In Wales and on the Norfolk coast the Black Dog was supposed to be amphibious, coming out of the sea by night and travelling about the lonely lanes. In Jersey he was “Tchico” and on the Isle of Man “Mauthe Doog.”²² He was seen mainly at night and was an omen of death.²³ Black Shuck is sometimes headless which is a contrast with the many headed Ravana or Cerberus, though no less frightening.

The early Christians believed I was the Devil and I was sent to torment the sinners. It was an early example of the “blame the victim” concept which is still used very effectively in these Modern times. It explains one of my two strongest allies - stigma and lack of understanding. The stigma attached to my attacks makes many people ashamed of their illness and the lack of understanding leads others to tell people whom I hold in my salivating jaws to get out and join a social group. “*Stop struggling with that black dog, get up and cheer up.*” “*Pull yourself up by the bootstraps*”- (Quite a difficult thing to do if you have ever tried to do this- they tend to snap in much the same way as my jaws.)

Let us continue now into the Middle Ages, where a new version of the Black Dog becomes popular (or unpopular.)

This was a belief in the Werewolf.²⁴ This belief had its origins with the Roman poet Ovid²⁵ who told the story of Lycaon, who changed into a wolf, howled, became savage - “*his own savage nature showed in his rabid jaws*” but this belief became much stronger in the Middle Ages. Werewolves were believed to have originally been disturbed humans. They were transformed into big, ferocious black dogs or wolves. Some believed the werewolf was the result of black bile, or an excess of melancholy in the body. These werewolves roamed the countryside at night and like my other black ancestors caused fear and panic. They were also known as “devil dogs”. (A bit like the demon dogs of Hindu belief.) The Church portrayed these “devil Dogs” as gargoyles - “*They were represented with pendulous lips, pulled back, menacing fangs, and ferocious eyes.*” Wolves live in cold climates and are often not only connected with night, but also with

¹⁹ **Quoted in Brewer**-Dictionary of Phrase and Fable. London 1898. References to Dog Star –Horace-Ode 1.17. Odes- Penguin Classics-1964.

²⁰ **ed Roy Porter**-The Faber Book of Madness p. 64

²¹ **Wikipedia**-free encyclopedia (Internet) org/wiki/Barghest p1 “Bargh” is thought to mean “town” and “ghest” to mean “ghost.”

²² 22 ibid p1

²³ www.indigogroup.co.uk/edge/bdogfl.htm p1 Many other names are given Dando, Yeth, Wishst Hound, Black Shag, Padfoot and Hooter. In Ireland he is called Pooka.

²⁴ [//members.tripod.com/alam_25/exp.htm](http://members.tripod.com/alam_25/exp.htm)

²⁵ **Ovid-Metamorphosis**- Penguin Classics p 135

Winter. Depression has been connected with Winter more than any other season, when days are short and nights are long.

Burton wrote “The Anatomy of Melancholy” in 1621 and in this study of melancholy he connects these werewolves with “black Choler” (bile), even saying that the werewolf was a manifestation of the Devil. It was given a name- lycanthropy after Ovid’s Lycaon.²⁶ He suggested blood letting would be helpful. This helped us dogs as it weakened the person. There is a saying that humans rival vampires in taking blood from other humans.

Shakespeare in Elizabethan England wrote in “King Lear” of Edgar, one of the characters, who was pretending to be mad and he says “*I’ll bark against the Dog Star*”.²⁷ This carries on my earlier references to the “Dog Star”. Many of Shakespeare’s characters speak as if they have been bitten by my ancestors. I will quote just one speech from his famous play “Hamlet” to illustrate this -²⁸

“I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.”

Hamlet does not know why he feels such despair but he was at the time in the jaws of my ancestor Claudius - A dog of the blackest kind. Hamlet’s famous speech “*To be or not to be*” is indeed a speech on the question of suicide.²⁹ It is an interesting and proud fact that the Black Dog inspired the best known speech in the English language.

That is one of our tricks. We can make a person feel anguish but they do not know why. We Black dogs follow a proud tradition of inducing feelings of despair and hopelessness. We slink up from behind and attack unexpectedly and drive people to contemplate suicide.

Milton, the poet who wrote “Paradise Lost” refers to the Greek Black Dog when he writes

*“Hence, loathed melancholy
Of Cerberus and blackest midnight
.’mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sounds unholy”*³⁰

Perhaps at this point I should make some references to Dogs. You will be familiar with the saying “Life’s a Bitch and then you Die”- well here are some more words to describe my character-“go to the Dogs”, lame Dog” ,”dog Box’ “dog eared, “dog fight’, “dogged”, “doggie Bag” (leftover food often spiked with msg) “doghouse” ,“dog in the Manger”,

²⁶ **ed Roy Porter**-The Faber Book of Madness.Faber and Faber 1991. P.64-7

²⁷ **Shakespeare- King Lear** – Act 111. Scene 1V.

²⁸ **Shakespeare- Hamlet**- Act 11. Scene 11.

²⁹ **Shakespeare- Hamlet**- Act 111.Scene 1.

³⁰ **Milton**- Paradise Lost.

“Dog tired”, “Dogsbody”, “Dog’s Breakfast”, “Dogwatch” (the shift no-one wants but a troglodyte) - but the watch when I wake my victims in the early hours of the morning -

*“I wake to feel the fell of dark, not day
What hours, O what black hours have we spent
This Night!”*

wrote Gerard Manly Hopkins.

There is Mongrel, bitch, cur, Kerr’s Cur, and I could continue but instead I will let sleeping dogs lie (and humans lie sleepless.)

Samuel Johnson was the Master who put the Black and the Dog together. He was a learned scholar who had read of earlier black dogs which I have described and he spoke of walking with the Black Dog, that vile melancholy. My Ancestor gave him a difficult time. He wrote in a letter to Mrs Thrale, a close friend - ³¹

“When I rise my breakfast is solitary, the Black Dog waits to share it, from breakfast to dinner he continues barking...Night comes at last, and some hours of restlessness and confusion bring me again to a day of solitude. What shall exclude the Black Dog from a habitation like this?”

My fine black Ancestor had moved into Dr Johnson’s home and his friend Boswell asked *“what will you do to keep away the black dog that worries you at home?”* ³² Dr Johnson tried to escape my ancestor by staying outdoors as much as was possible but it shows that the black dog was victorious ³³

“ Solitary nights were to be feared, for when darkness fell, the mind, like the eye, saw things less clearly than by day and confusions and perversions of the brain, manufactured black thoughts. Which is why he contrived to stay out into the small hours, to shrink the time left until light came back.

“And then on Wednesday evening of the third week in April, climbing to his bed in Johnson’s Court, he became aware of the Black Dog crouching on the landing, the shadow of its lolling tongue lapping the staircase wall. The stench of its hateful breath seeped into the chamber. He wrenched up the window to let in the night air, but still the rank odour swilled about the room; he propped himself upright and dozed with his hand clamped over his nostrils.”

His friend Boswell comforted him by saying that depression was the sign of superior sensitivity and saw only positives in it but Samuel Johnson had been visited by my Ancestral Black Dog and tortured by him too frequently to agree. ³⁴

The artist Richard Dadd, who spent time as an inmate in Bethlem or Bedlam painted pictures of Dogs wandering in that Asylum. ³⁵

³¹ **Samuel Johnson**- Letter to Mrs Thrale 28th June 1783

³² **J.Boswell 1791**- quoting from a letter by Samuel Johnson

³³ **Beryl Bainbridge**- According to Queeny

³⁴ **ed Porter**- The Faber Book of Madness- Faber and Faber 1991 p 83-3

³⁵ **maPatricia Alderidge**- Richard Dadd- Academy Editions- London- 1974

My Black family drove Writers of the 17th and 18th century such as Pope, to write of the Dog Star troubling him, Scott to write of the “*spectre hound*” Keats to write of Melancholy “*anguish of the soul*”, Coleridge of “*Dejection*”, and Gray to write an “*Elegy in a Country Churchyard.*”³⁶ Some of the emotions associated with the Black Dog are expressed in Coleridge’s poem “The Ancient Mariner”³⁷

*“Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread
And having once turn’d round, walks on
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.”
I am that “shadow that we like to pretend is not there.”*³⁸

Lockhart in 1839 wrote that he experienced “A great relief from the Black Dog which would have worried me at home.”³⁹

Brewer in his “Dictionary of Phrase and Fable” written in the 19th century tells us there was an expression describing a “sullen person”- “A black dog has walked over him”.⁴⁰

Freud, the Father of Psychoanalysis wrote a few famous case studies. One was called the Wolf Man - about a Man who had a phobia about wolves. His Father had been attacked so fiercely by the Black Dog that he had committed suicide. Freud, of course attributed the Wolf man’s problem to a sexual matter, but I prefer to think my dogged Ancestor, also played a part.⁴¹

I have a long list of some of the famous people my ancestors and I have attacked - Samuel Johnson, Goethe (who in “Faust” had his devil disguised as a “Black Dog.”)⁴² Schumann, Luther, Tolstoy, Kafka, Mahler, Hugo Wolf, (an unfortunate name), (I did a bit of Dog eats Dog there), Van Gogh, Abraham Lincoln, Florence Nightingale, Conan Doyle, Winston Churchill, Hopkins, Emily Dickinson, Styron, who described my attack as “a veritable howling tempest in the brain.” and “a gray drizzle of horror”⁴³ Virginia Woolf, (with a name like that are you surprised?). She described her black “woolf” experience - “Why is life so tragic, so like a little strip of pavement over an abyss. I look down, I feel giddy, I wonder how I am ever to walk to the end”⁴⁴ Sylvia Plath, Frances Farmer, Janet Frame, Mel Gibson, Jon Konrads. I have attacked people like Peter Sellers and Spike Milligan who in their better moments made people laugh. To Spike laughter was the “light sparkling on a deep, dark river.” I took the smile off their faces, though it was hard with Spike, who managed even when in my grip to make a joke. When he was given ECT he said “Use more electricity- I have shares in the Electricity Company!”⁴⁵

³⁶ Poetry by Pope, Keats Coleridge, Gray-

³⁷ Coleridge- The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner

³⁸ Anne Deveson-Tell Me I’m Here-Penguin Books 1991 p 2

³⁹ Lockhart- The Life Of Walter Scott-1839

⁴⁰ Brewer- Dictionary of Phrase and Fable- London 1898

⁴¹ ed Gardiner- The Wolf- Man and Sigmund Freud-Penguin Books 1972

⁴² www.wordwizard.com/clubhouse/founddiscuss 1.asp?Num=6406

⁴³ Styron- Darkness Visible-Picador- 1988

⁴⁴ Virginia Woolf- The Waves.

⁴⁵ Spike Milligan and Anthony Clare- Depression and How to Survive it- Cox and Wyman-1993.

but a more poignant comment he made was *“The whole world is taken away and there is this black void, this terrible, terrible, empty, aching black void.”*⁴⁶

So what about Churchill? He is very often thought to be the man who coined the phrase “Black Dog” but he was a great admirer of Samuel Johnson⁴⁷ and continued to use the same label. It is said that as he travelled to meet Roosevelt to request America to join the War, he listened to Noel Coward’s “Mad Dogs and Englishmen” which probably had some bitter symbolism for him. Churchill was well aware of this black fiend and told his Doctor *“for two or three years, the light faded out of the picture. I did my work. I sat in the House of Commons, but black depression settled on me.”*⁴⁸ Moran, his Doctor says that Churchill thought of suicide-

*“I don’t like standing near the edge of a platform when an express train is passing through...A second’s action would end everything. A few drops of desperation.”*⁴⁹

Moran, also says *“He was afflicted by fits of depression that might last for months. He called them “The Black Dog.”*⁵⁰ And Moran on one occasion felt the Black Dog himself. He asked *“Is Winston’s Black Dog catching?”*⁵¹

The “V” for Victory sign is however certainly Churchillian and he is remembered more for his fine speeches in World War 11 than for his days when my Ancestor attacked him. He replied with *“blood, toil, tears and sweat.”*⁵² He has inspired the logo of the Black Dog Institute where the Victory sign overshadows the Black Dog. It is the hope my victims hold against my attacks - that I can be overcome.

Over the History of my Ancestors, we Black Dogs have faced many enemies-Straitjackets were thought to be useful, but they helped us and held the patient still so we could attack more viciously. Purging and bleeding, which were also thought to hurt us dogs really only weakened our victims. Our victims were whipped or given cold showers. There were *“manacles, chains, fetters, muffs, body straps, stocks, strong dresses, strait waistcoats, coercion chairs, strongchairs and crib beds.”*⁵³ The little Black Dog laughed to see such fun. Our victims remained in the grip of our jaws.

One of my best weapons remains the shame and stigma attached to any contact with me. I can make my victims ashamed of their illness, so they will not seek any help. One growl from me and they hide humiliated and degraded, blaming themselves, not me for their difficulties.

Early drugs used were addictive or very strong and once again weakened our victims. Valium and other minor tranquilizers made life easy for us Dogs. But now there are sophisticated black dog poisons such as new Antidepressant drugs. Our best friends here are uneducated members of the media and certain religious groups who either give a drug bad press or discourage the use of medication. Depressed young people are more ready to

⁴⁶ **ibid** p 18

⁴⁷ **Moran- Winston Churchill-** The Struggle for Survival 1940-1965- Heron - 1966.p413

⁴⁸ **ibid** p167

⁴⁹ **ibid** p167

⁵⁰ **ibid** p181

⁵¹ **ibid** p755

⁵² **Churchill-** War Speech

⁵³ **Showalter-** The Female Malady-Virago-1985 p 31

take an unknown illegal drug than try a tested drug which is not addictive and which may poison me.

The brain is such a complex organ that little is known even after years of research about the way it works. It is like putting a foot into the Ocean and trying to discover its immense complexities from that contact. I must admit though that some antidepressant drugs have strengthened my victims and they have wriggled free from my salivating jaws. There is ECT which in many extreme cases where my teeth are sunk into the throat of my victim and I am tormenting him or her so much that they are ready to end their lives, the shock has driven me away yelping.

There is Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Counselling. New treatments are being used with magnets and with light. - There are endless attacks on the black dog that I have to contend with now. There are many wars fought against me on many fronts. As Charles Dana once said "*When a dog bites a man, that is not news, but when a man bites a dog that is news*"⁵⁴ and at times I am bitten, and sometimes I fear my demise, but I have a friend, who can be quite a bitch and she has given me several litters of little black puppies to carry on my work in the future. I am an old Dog now, but my little pups may be able to learn new tricks.

Sometimes I lead a pack of black dogs, yelping and barking and tearing at their Victims. When this happens whole Societies become Depressed as in War or Depression or Natural Disasters. Winston Churchill addressed bankers and financiers in 1929 on Black Tuesday, when the Stockmarket crashed - a day on which 16 million shares changed hands and the black dogs were out partying in packs. He began his speech with the words "*Friends and Former Millionaires...*"⁵⁵ We dogs drove many of those former millionaires to take their own lives.

The packs of black dogs are out now in Iraq, as they have been in the Sudan, in Rwanda, in Detention Camps here in Australia. My hounds love Social Injustice, Poverty, Discrimination, Oppression, Cruelty, and they are constantly finding new places to hunt. The World is large and there are many hunting grounds.

Arnold wrote of the state of the World-

*"We are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight'
Where ignorant armies clash by night."*⁵⁶

I can also turn my attention to other animals. I have attacked animals such as elephants, cats, other dogs - for example I drove Marie Antoinette's dog Thisbee to jump from a bridge in Paris into the Seine, on the day her mistress was guillotined.⁵⁷ and many animals in circuses and zoos are in my grasp. Whales beach themselves and we all know

⁵⁴ **Dana**- a well known saying

⁵⁵ **William Manchester**- Winston Churchill- City Lights- Manchester 1931.

⁵⁶ **Arnold**-Dover Beach in Penguin Book of English Verse-1956 p 345

⁵⁷ **Ripley- Believe it or Not**-This is a bit tongue in jaw.

about lemmings. I have seen sparrows calling when I have held one of them in my mouth. I don't know my effect on insects and I have not seen my effect on cockroaches (They do not look very happy). I may even affect bacteria and viruses..who knows? (I am no microbiologist but microscopic black doglets called antibiotics and vaccines may make them miserable.) I am sure I have seen plants depressed - especially after a bushfire has raged, the leaves seem to cling more closely to the branches, so my effects stretch far beyond the human species.

I still fear those who bravely fight the Black Dog, whether they are in the medical profession, research, or those who are bitten and attacked by me from time to time. Many of those that my Ancestors and I have tormented have been great Artists, Writers, Musicians, Political Leaders, and Comedians. Some have succumbed to my sadistic bite and I have driven them to suicide, but many of these have left behind great literature, great works of art, great speeches to inspire others in their struggles against me. And not only have the famous done this. Many ordinary people (perhaps as many as one in five) have faced my attacks with great courage and have learned ways to fight back and lead inspired lives. Some have even learned to appreciate life and to be more sensitive as a result of wounds I have inflicted on them. My hope is they will not have the outer or inner resources to defeat me altogether, but I am discouraged by Churchill's words- "*Give us the tools and we will finish the job.*"⁵⁸ I think by that he meant funding from the governments for research into many ways to deal with me. And at times I am afraid. There is a powerful symbol that I hate. It is of a Chinese man carrying a string bag standing in front of a line of tanks in Tiananmen Square. These powerful Tanks that could easily have crushed and killed this man came to a standstill.⁵⁹ He is like the human beings that I hound and haunt who have gained insight into how I work and although they are as vulnerable as this man with his shopping bag, they turn on the me and my fellow black dogs when we visit and deal with us very bravely. Perhaps insight and courage by my victims and research by those who wish to destroy me will bring about my defeat.

Styron ends his book "Darkness Visible" after a grim encounter with me, with words that make me, the Black Dog feel defeat. "*For those who have dwelt in depression's dark wood, and known its inexplicable agony, their return from the abyss is not unlike the ascent of the poet, trudging upward and upward out of Hell's Black depths and at last emerging into what he saw as "the shining world."* There, whoever has been restored to health has almost always been restored to capacity for serenity and joy, and this maybe indemnity enough for having endured the despair beyond despair."⁶⁰

So perhaps it is the Victory sign that shadows my black image rather than vice versa. I have many enemies- research, insight, medication, counselling of many kinds, courage, and those who care for and love those I attack, so



⁵⁸ Churchill-War Speech

⁵⁹ An actual event in 1989 in Tiananmen Square. It has become a symbol of great human courage or "The Power of One."

⁶⁰ Styron- Darkness Visible- Picador 1988- p84

like the humans of Pompeii I have my spray-can to write up some graffiti on a 21st century wall, in English this time for my descendants - for even I feel pessimistic at times
- **Black Dog Beware!!**

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