Andy Dibble - One Last Belly Rub

When my dog died, I believed he would be back in a few days. If a carpenter from Nazareth could manage it, Toby could. And if I could descend like Orpheus, I’d find him guarding the gates of the Underworld, howling and hopping on his hind legs, like he did in life when the doorbell rang.

Three days and no Toby, so I thought he would return after nine nights, like Odin from the world tree. Not with runes, but with a vole he scared up from a hole in the backyard.

He didn’t come in, wet and muddy-pawed, so I cleaved with still greater scientific rigor to a new theory. Toby is like the Buddha, who will return at the end of the world to give one last sermon, his body reassembling from where it’s scattered in sixty-four thousand reliquaries. Just so, at the end of all things, Toby will return for one last belly rub.