Me and My Dog
by Barbara Henning
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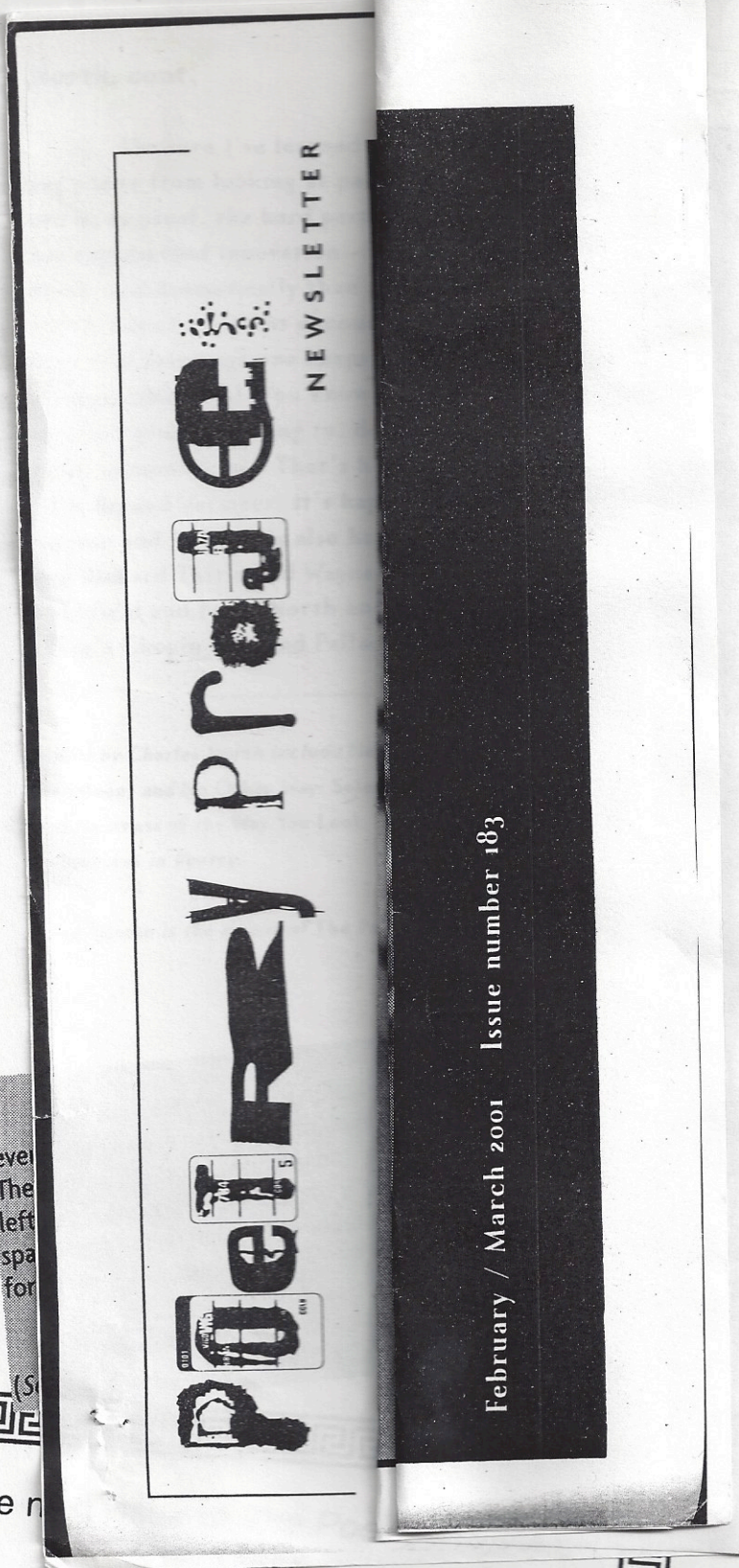
In Barbara Henning's *Me and My Dog*, everyday details and language of death become a means to both witness and revel in how we live. The result is breath-taking work, simple and profound.

"Out of Harms Way," the opening poem, is a fine example of how Henning subverts the narrative about death to make it a part of these poems of daily life. This haunting beauty is rich in rhythmic mantras of sounds and images, nuanced repetition, subtle and metaphorical language as well as astute observations and a measure of emotion and dispassion which, in this case, administers a dose of universal reality without being sentimental or maudlin:

> Sometimes we leap into a pose that isn't a pose and it
> [stiffens
> Sometimes we sleep in a pose that isn't a pose
> More often than not, you woke in a state of confusion
> Surprised by the afternoon light and the touch of my
> [hand
> Most nights, I sleep with my hands in prayer position
> The dog lies under the bed, waiting for you to come
> [home
> The dog lies under the bed, waiting for me to wake up
> The dog lies under the bed

This poem, and the book overall, lifts the spirit the way Arvo Pärt does in his sublime *Cantus in memory of Benjamin Britten*. And Dorothy, the lively dog on the cover, intermittently disappears and reappears, as a reminder of an unconditional love which runs throughout the book. ("How many cocoons, I wonder, made the silk threads in my nightgown which briefly touched your leg and then became this love letter with no return address"—"Each Plastic Bead Has A Tiny Hole")

Me and My Dog puts us in a state of hyperawareness about our own lives—how we choose to live, where we choose to put our energies, and ultimately leads us to examine what's important.

—DONNA CARTELLI