

Excerpt from Dark Matter presented  
as part of Singlehandedly! Portland  
Story Theater's Solo Performance Festival.

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Dark Matter  
Cemetery

It was a peculiar experience walking on a road at night that I had only driven on during the day. The path twisted and turned. Everything looked different. I didn't remember it this way. It was very dark. It was taking longer to walk to the grave than I expected. I felt a bit turned-around, somewhat disoriented. A twinge of fear bolted through my stomach. I felt scared, not of being in a graveyard at night, no, of being lost. "That's silly," I told myself, "I haven't left the path." Glancing over my shoulder I thought that maybe if I could see my car I'd feel better... but no, I couldn't see my car, not anymore; I'd gone too far. I thought about turning back but I'd come this far and going on seemed like the best choice. I trudged up the hill focusing on the path when suddenly I was startled by a dog barking.

Peering over into the darkness I could just make out the form of a man walking through the headstones, he was holding a dog tightly on a leash. A million fears crossed my mind, like spiders scurrying in all directions. I stopped. I was uncertain what to do. The hair on my neck was standing on end and I broke out in a sweat on my lip. "What's this guy doing here on a night like this? Is he some kind of a nut?!! And look at that dog..."

Then he called out over the wind and rain, "Do you have a dog?"

... I called back "No. Should I have a dog?"

And then he calls back "If you did, my dog could run with your dog."

When he said that I thought, 'Oh well, here's a person who simply had some hope that his dog would have a playmate... here, among the dead, in the winter's night, as the rain fell.'

Still feeling afraid, I started walking to my mother again, towards the man and his dog. They were nearing the pathway. The dog was still barking.

As I got closer, I could see the dog was a large Doberman. The dog was pulling, pulling on the leash. The man was old, much older than I'd thought. I could see his age in his face, in his eyes. The man was big, bigger than anyone I'd ever seen. I felt very small. The man was sturdy looking, as if he could knock a tree over with a single blow.

When I was close enough to hear him, he told me,