

Sheila Wellehan

Good Day

They say to stop
while the week has more good days than bad days –
four to three, don't wait for three to four.
I vowed to let my dog leave this world
with his dignity, but I've changed my position.

Because once you're dead,
that's it, you're dead.
Guthrie woke up to a frigid night-morning
with a terrible case of the runs.
He napped till noon,
then had trouble rising,
and needed help to stand in front of his bowls.

By 2 p.m., he's revived and restless,
and says with a weak bark it's time to walk.
We'll need to hustle – just two hours to sunset –
to push today into the column marked *good*.
We drive to his favorite island,

Guthrie knows each tree and rock,
every single grain of sand.
We walk ninety minutes,
studying changes since our last visit.
Not bad for a dog past fifteen.
Lingering after dark in the parking lot,
he sniffs the ocean and smiles

at everyone who walks by.
When the attendant drags out the *Closed* sign,
I lift Guthrie gently into the car.
He wags his tail as he settles in the back seat,
welcoming help with grace and good humor –
my dog's never been more dignified.

Sheila Wellehan's poetry is featured in *MockingHeart Review*, *Rust + Moth*, *Thimble Literary Magazine*, *Tinderbox Poetry Journal*, *Whale Road Review*, and many other journals and anthologies. She lives in Cape Elizabeth, Maine. Visit her online at www.sheilawellehan.com.