

ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL
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It is 2:30 AM and I am already up and in my office and have been for an hour now. I just wake up and am not one of those folks who lie in bed and stare at the ceiling. No way. I just get up and find something to do until I am tired enough to sleep some more. I usually end up on the couch in my office rather than back in the bedroom. When winter comes and it is cold, my dog Molly (who is a 'he' and hangs out in my office) wants to get under the covers with me and that is OK too. It is uncomfortable for me but I love that he wants to be with me. Or is he just cold?

Right now it is still summer and Molly is asleep on his dog bed in the corner of my office. Around his head are a series of bones, a tennis ball that he loves, and even an old piece of deer antler. These are all things he wants to keep around himself. From time to time I pick up all the little bones and put them in a small box in another room, but he patiently finds each one and brings it back into my office, piece by piece. Oh well. He has more energy for this than I do, so there they all are.

Molly does his very best to be comfortable. Of course he loves food and next to that he loves people, and loves to be with them at all times. When I leave my office, he dutifully gets up and follows me, even if I am just going to the bathroom. Of course, he does not follow me into THAT room because in that room he sometimes has to take a bath, like when he rolls in something horrible on one of his walks. Oh yes, he loves his walks but he hates that bathtub.

And I like to walk too, especially in the early morning in the fields and woods. Out there I find that Molly is not alone in wanting to be happy. Every other creature does too. All of them are looking for food (often each other!), carefully making little nests, raising their young, and seeking shelter from the storms. No, these critters don't read books and can't speak to me, but their actions speak louder than any words they might say. It is crystal clear that they want to be happy just like us and no critter I have ever seen (unless it is a human or two) voluntarily wants to suffer.

Here we all are, humans, animals, bugs, and even snakes and spiders, thrown together into this world we are living in. Is it surprising that I don't step on ants or that I brush off mosquitoes when they try to land on me or that my wife Margaret carries each and every grain moth carefully outside and sets it free?

Graphic: A drawing I did one spring morning out on a farm, many years ago.

