I stand on a sand patch, surveying assonance of dappled rocks, clouds, water, fog, the seals in the bay. Did I mention gray? Dark cedars drip behind me. There is spirit or religion, meaning somewhere in here, and I’m just the one to find it.

The dog will have none of that. But when she finds a dead bird she sweetly picks it up and carries it for hours. It feels right to her, for no other reason does she do this. I long to shoot ducks for her sake to complete the satisfaction she is running toward. There’s no logic here, a small black lab looking to be useful, that’s all. I ache to give her a task equal to her gifts, no more.

But first, she’ll curl at my feet, sleeping and drying by the fire. To be of use, worthy and true, it couldn’t hurt to also be well rested, warm and fed. It might even be a requirement.