



Fifteen Dogs

André Alexis

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"I wonder", said Hermes, "what it would be like if animals had human intelligence."

"I'll wager a year's servitude, answered Apollo, that animals – any animal you like – would be even more unhappy than humans are, if they were given human intelligence."

And so it begins: a bet between the gods Hermes and Apollo leads them to grant human consciousness and language to a group of dogs overnighing at a Toronto veterinary clinic. Suddenly capable of more complex thought, the pack is torn between those who resist the new ways of thinking, preferring the old 'dog' ways, and those who embrace the change.

The gods watch from above as the dogs venture into their newly unfamiliar world, as they become divided among themselves, as each struggles with new thoughts and feelings. Wily Benjy moves from home to home, Prince becomes a poet, and Majnoun forges a relationship with a kind couple that stops even the Fates in their tracks.

André Alexis's contemporary take on the apologue offers an utterly compelling and affecting look at the beauty and perils of human consciousness. By turns meditative and devastating, charming and strange, *Fifteen Dogs* shows you can teach an old genre new tricks.

Fifteen Dogs Details

Date : Published April 14th 2015 by Coach House Books (first published March 23rd 2015)

ISBN : 9781552453056

Author : André Alexis

Format : Paperback 171 pages

Genre : Fiction, Cultural, Canada, Fantasy, Animals

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From Reader Review Fifteen Dogs for online ebook

Glenn Sumi says

A doggone clever and moving book

If animals were granted human intelligence, would they die happier or unhappier? That's the intriguing question at the heart of André Alexis's imaginative novel, the most recent winner of Canada's prestigious Giller Prize.

The gods Apollo and Hermes, dressed like hipsters and drinking Sleemans, are considering this one night at a Toronto bar. Apollo says animals with human intelligence would die even more unhappily than they would otherwise; he's willing to bet a year's servitude on that. Hermes agrees, and says that if just one animal dies happy, he'll win.

Since they're passing a veterinary clinic when discussing the wager, they decide to bestow human consciousness on the 15 dogs left there overnight. The remainder of the book explores what happens to those canines, from their breakout (several figure out how to release themselves from their cages) to their deaths, some violent, others peaceful.

The result is equal parts survival story, socio-political parable and Philosophy 200 course on what it means to be human. Think Watership Down or Animal Farm as told by the gods. The dogs (Hmm... "dog" is "god" spelled backwards, right?) form a hierarchy, deceive one another, fight, kill, split off into factions... and then there's the matter of who gets to hump whom.

Alexis, a poet and fiction writer, has great fun with the premise, especially around the idea of language. One of the dogs becomes a poet, which enchants some and angers others. A couple of them learn how to speak English and interact with humans.

And this is a very olfactory book. There's a heightened attention to smells, for obvious reasons.

There's also a lot of literary humour. When Majnoun, a clever black Poodle, is rescued by a couple of well-read types, the humans discuss what to call him:

- Why don't you name him?
- You think we should keep him?
- Why not? Once he gets better he can keep you company during the day.
- Okay. Why don't we call him Lord Jim?
- You want to name him after the world's most boring book?
- If I wanted to do that, I'd call him Golden Bowl.

Lest you get confused about the characters, there's a helpful "dramatis canes" at the beginning which tells you each dog's name and breed. And two beautiful maps show you the areas in the city where the canines cavort.

Among other things, this is a wonderful Toronto novel, beginning in a familiar local watering hole (the Wheat Sheaf Tavern) and travelling all over the city, from High Park and Bloor West and over to the Beach.

It'll make you think about group dynamics, love and what separates us from animals. And it'll make you pay a bit more attention next time you pass a crowded dog park. Also: be sure to read the author's note at the end. Just as dogs hear certain noises we can't, there are surprises hidden in the text for you to, er, sniff out.

Malcolm says

This was a remarkable, imaginative, thought-provoking book which examines just what sets humans apart from other animals.

Apollo and Hermes are sitting in a bar in Toronto (How's that for a start?). Shortly, the discussion turns to the nature of humanity and a bet is made regarding whether human intelligence leads to more or less "happiness". Being gods, the two find fifteen dogs kenneled in a vet clinic nearby and instill each with the intelligence of human beings. Will their new lives end in greater or lesser happiness with this new gift? That's the bet.

The story that follows examines the lives of these fifteen. Some are gone early and tragically. Others stay part of the story throughout.

But, at its heart, the story is about humanity, its good and its bad, and what it means to come to an end with no regrets, with eyes and mind on what lies ahead, not behind.

Like I said, a remarkable book that I would highly recommend.

Imi says

I wasn't expecting to be so blown away by this. It easily could have been terrible. I'm not usually a fan of novels told from a dog's perspective, which are usually overly sentimental and also require the reader to suspend disbelief at the "dog's" very undoglike thoughts. Alexis dealt with this problem thanks to the novel's imaginative and highly original premise; the Greek gods Apollo and Hermes have a bet over what will happen if you give human consciousness and intelligence to fifteen dogs. Their test subjects are no longer truly dogs, but not human either, and through the fifteen distinct characters of the chosen dogs, Alexis is able to explore the age-old questions and contradictions of what it means to be human.

I honestly can't think of any other book like this. Not only is it rare in its originality, but it's gripping, hugely entertaining and thought-provoking. It's unsettling at times, especially earlier on, where the pack of dogs are faced with a fight for survival and power, but there are also moments that are breathtakingly beautiful and touching. My favourite of the stories were the friendships between Bella and Athena ((view spoiler), and between Majnoun and Nira, which was perhaps the story with most insight and depth into questioning the meaning of life, language and love.

A simply remarkable book, and certainly one of my favourites of the year so far.

Chihoe Ho says

Trust a pack of dogs to tell us more about what it is that makes us human! *Fifteen Dogs* started off as a

simple story but became more insightful with every twist and turn.

I must admit, I initially resisted this novel due to my snobbery – think about it, a story about fifteen talking dogs sounds like it could go downhill pretty quickly, doesn't it? It was foolish of me to think so as André Alexis has deftly crafted an undeniably entertaining and thought-provoking plot. It's filled with keen observations and sly commentaries on the human psyche, for example, this gem of a line: "Humans do not always mean what is meant by the sounds they make. You must be careful."

It reads easy; simultaneously being poetic and matter-of-factly, like having a narrator convey the stream of consciousness of the pack of dogs even though they are individually presenting their thoughts in serialized chapters. The story is like a puzzle with sliding pieces that when complete, reveals what lies behind the overall picture. Each puzzle piece represents a characteristic and personality trait that make the canines so individualistic.

Social standings and conventions, relationships, belonging and loyalty, love and sex, the passage of time, death and mourning, language, the arts and culture – these were some of the facets of human life that were touched upon to answer what it is that makes us happy to have lived a full life. Happiness - that's the ultimate end goal. And honestly, based on how true to the state of humanity the lives of all fifteen dogs play out, I'm left feeling saddened but also inspired by just how fleeting our happiness can be.

Jessica Woodbury says

This is that rare literary novel that has chops but also serious mainstream potential. The story of two gods who give a group of dogs human consciousness in a bet has a lot to say about thought and individuality and what it means to be a person and a dog. It also has a plot full of goodness and violence that keeps the reader turning pages. (I read it in 2 nights and wouldn't stop until I was finished on the second.)

The bet is whether dogs bestowed with consciousness can die happy, so of course the plot involves not just the fifteen dogs but also their deaths. So while this book is probably best appreciated by those who have owned dogs and care about them, they're also the ones who will be most affected by the violence the dogs give and receive. I know many people who say they'll read or watch just about anything unless it involves violence against animals, and yet they're the very audience that will find the most to love here. I'd counsel dog owners to brace themselves but go for it.

It is rare I find a book both thoughtful and meditative but also enjoyable and fascinating. This is that rare book. I hope it finds a significant readership because it really deserves it. I can't think of any other book like it.

I enjoyed the story of Majnoun the poodle and his new owner the most. It's dog lover wish fulfillment of the grandest kind, the kind of dog/human relationship that transcends ownership and becomes something more.

Paul Lima says

Okay, I'm half way through this book and I'm not sure how I lasted this long. The author obviously knows nothing about dogs. To settle a bet, two Greek gods give 15 dogs in a pound human attributes, including speech. And they pretty much all turn on each other; many die. Is this a commentary on human behavior using dogs? Whatever it is, it lacks any credibility--even with the willing suspension of disbelief. It is a

poorly written book with a bunch of 'characters' who basically become assholes. I don't care where the book is going; I quit. (I live in the area where the book is set; I enjoyed seeing my neighborhood in a book for about, oh, five pages. And then the ridiculousness of the story got to me and overcame any enjoyment seeing my neighborhood in a book gave me.)

Lark Benobi says

There is something immediately gripping about this novel. Its core conceit--that 15 dogs become suddenly human-like in their ability to reason and perceive their own mortality--was a very effective way to explore one of the oldest adages in philosophy: whether it's true that "the unexamined life is not worth living." The story is beautifully told. It gave me new spaces in my brain to think about some very old questions.

Jennifer (aka EM) says

Edited: my first review was harsh. And although I stand by my overall evaluation, I don't really want to slam this little book, a Giller prize winner - and recognize that I am decidedly in the minority on it.

This book was disappointing. It failed for me in three main ways:

1) The authorial voice left me uninspired - I found it monotonous and entirely lacking in humour (for a book that seemed tailor-made to be chockablock with whimsy or dark comedy or both). I found that the most dramatic moments were telegraphed a mile in advance and then they were quickly over. I was never fully engaged. In fact, I was often bored.

2) The author doesn't seem to know dogs at all. He seemed to be falling back on the idea of dogs as pack animals who exist entirely on a dominance-submissiveness continuum; a theory long since discredited in doggie circles as a superficial understanding of the complexity of dogs' emotional, social, and behavioural repertoires.

I've read a lot of non-fiction about dogs, and so I pay a lot of attention to how dogs are portrayed and how they are used as devices in literature. Don't get me wrong, I didn't want this book to do a good job on doggie psychology; but I definitely wanted it - and needed it - to do a good job on what that psychology would be like when infused with human consciousness. This was the great potential of the central conceit, but it wasn't done convincingly.

I was looking for anthropomorphism of a specific sort here: not the manipulative kind, but the compelling, thought-experimental kind. There were only small glimmers of it at the end with Majmoun, which was too late and too expositional.

Without this, I had no connection to the dogs. No emotional investment in them. No interest in their characters or their lives and therefore (view spoiler)

I don't think that this was the narrative arc Mr. Alexis was seeking to create, but it was my experience reading.

3) As a result of these two factors, the central question - to explore whether human consciousness and language (as a reflection of that consciousness) brings joy or misery - fell flat. What I was hoping would be an original, creative approach to it (i.e., giving the titular 15 dogs human consciousness and language and seeing what happened) felt muddled, under-explored, off-point, and unfulfilling.

I did love that (view spoiler)

Oh, and: (view spoiler)

Sorry Mr. Alexis and Giller peeps: not this one, not for me.

Jill says

If George Orwell decided to write his allegorical *Animal Farm* in 2015 instead of 1945, he might have come up with something like *Fifteen Dogs*.

On second thought, scratch that. I don't think anyone – not George Orwell, not Paul Auster with *Timbuktu*, not Jack London with *Call of the Wild* – could ever come up with something quite this sui generis although they've all done some darn good writing of their own.

Fifteen Dogs is, to put it quite simply, remarkable. The premise is quirky: Zeus's two sons, Apollo and Hermes, come up with an extraordinary wager: they will instill select animals with human intelligence and communication skills. If, at their life's end, any of the animals is happier than he or she might have been, Hermes is the victor, if, however, human intelligence leads to more misery than contentment, Apollo will prevail. It is decided that the fortuitous fifteen will be 15 canine patients of a nearby veterinary clinic.

At first, there's a lot of dogs to keep straight (fortunately, the author helpfully provides a cast of characters) but eventually, the action focuses on just a few: Majnoun, a black poodle...Benjy the Beagle...and most compellingly, Prince, an amicable mutt who is also a poet. Here are some musings from Majnoun as he tries to decipher the state of being human: "What would it be like, for instance, to be unable to distinguish the smell of snow in winter from the smell of snow in early spring? What kind of world was it in which one could not, blindfolded, distinguish the great range in the taste of water or smell when a female was in heat. To be so limited? Inconceivable."

This book is philosophical in the best of senses, dealing with concepts of individual freedom vs. pack conformity, the old ways vs. the new ways, domination vs. submission, tortured knowledge vs. mindless happiness, and more. The questions at the crux of the book are some of the most important of all time: What does it mean to be alive – to love, to think, to suffer, to feel, to communicate, to question? Where do we all – canine and human – fit into the world and when does our dedication to "who we are" rise to being unique and noble? What happens when we become strangers to our own kind...and to our very nature?

Andre Alexis weaves in a fair amount of subtle, yet laugh-out-loud humor as he inhabits the dogs' perspectives. Yet his fifteen canines are essentially noble creatures, and he never plays a scene strictly for laughs. This is really a wonderful book. You don't have to be a dog-lover to love it but for those of us who are, special treats are waiting.

Lata says

Earthy, and at times lyrical, this story of a bet between Apollo and Hermes plays out in the minds and actions of several dogs in Toronto. The two gods wonder, if granted human intelligence and language, would dogs lead unhappier lives than humans. The gods then bestow said gifts upon fifteen dogs in a clinic. The results of the gods' actions play out for years, with the dogs experiencing confusion, anger, fear, sadness, and in rare cases, some happiness.

The dogs struggle to understand their wider understandings of their world, but at the same time, are also limited by their dog natures and humans' reactions to them. There are a number of questions the author raises, about consciousness and human nature, and the somewhat precarious lives domesticated dogs live as our servants and in some cases, our punching bags. A few of the dogs find the change too much, while a few begin expanding their minds, to mixed results. The author focuses on four dogs in particular, and tells their stories as they cope with their freedom and consciousness. There are several tragic incidents in this book, and I found myself in tears for parts Majnoun's and Prince's chapters.

I also found myself thinking a lot about

- What it means to grant favours and charity, and how this could be received by the recipients
 - The impact of freedom upon those who have never had it, and how confusing and frightening that might be
 - How callous and arbitrary the powerful can be.
-

Wendy says

After finishing this novel last night I watched the 30 minute long video of Andre Alexis being interviewed. Being a self proclaimed depressive fit perfectly with the type of person I imagined this author to be. There was not an ounce of happiness in this story. (Ok possibly the very end depending on how you look at it)

I am a dog lover! If 15 dogs are going to be released from a veterinary clinic most are going to be seeking love and affection.

What we were given was a lot of violence and death.

I am sure there are a lot of intellectual discussions about this novel but I was quite disappointed with the author's negative take on human nature.

I am giving this book 2 stars and that's because I enjoyed being familiar with the various areas of Toronto the dogs encountered.

Alex says

My dog can't talk. I checked again this morning. His answer to pretty much everything I say is to play bow and growl at me.

Andre Alexis's book is about fifteen dogs who can suddenly talk - and reason like humans - and it seems tailor-made for college freshmen. Alexis gets an opportunity to blitz us through Philosophy 101 as they wrestle with their new sentience (the dogs, I mean, although watching freshmen wrestle with their new sentience is also entertaining). "One of the qualities his ideal dog possessed was *being*," one dog muses: "therefore the dog of dogs *had* to exist," and here's Anselm's ontological argument in all its inanity.

Alexis's dogs are obsessed with status, a primary theme of the book: who is humping whom? Status is not of

immediate concern to me, so this theme had limited resonance. But as a guy who spends a lot of time in dog parks, I can confirm that status is of immediate concern to dogs. I'm not sure whether Alexis chose to write about dogs because he was interested in status, or to write about status because he was interested in dogs.

I do think his interest in "status" goes beyond philosophy, though. Look, you can't help but notice sentences like this: "Masters have agreed that their submissives must be bound to them with leashes and collars. If you were a master, would you keep me on a leash?" And in case you think I'm reading too much into that, Alexis goes ahead and throws a full-on human bondage sex scene right in there. Hegel has something to say about masters too, and we're not *not* talking about Hegel - but we're talking about sex too. There's a current of kink through this book.

It's a fast read, plenty entertaining, and it comes off as a college book. It has some neat ideas but nothing crazy deep. The squeamish may be put off by that healthy but kinky human sex scene, a variety of dog-on-dog action, and/or the many deaths: it's stated up front that dogs will die.

Not my dog, of course. My dog will live forever. Good boy. He glances at me sideways, very quickly, and then play bows.

Andrew says

Strange that I don't want to write a review for this, because a review won't do it justice. If you're a dog lover, this book will wreck you, and I mean that in the best way possible. Astounding, heart breaking, and easily among the best books I've read this year.

Brad says

The ending of *Fifteen Dogs* was a no win for author and readers alike; well, some of the readers lost, and I came down on the losing side.

The problem (if one can call it that) is built right into the premise. Apollo and Hermes make a bet (and this is no spoiler since it opens the book) that, having granted human intelligence to fifteen dogs in a Toronto vet hospital, not a single one of the fifteen dogs will die happy. Apollo is on the side of unhappiness; Hermes is on the side of happiness. One of them wins and one of them loses, and whoever you are as a reader, whichever side you agree with, when the opposition wins you are bound to be disappointed. That was me. I was on the wrong side.

But the journey to get there was amazing, and the philosophical questions about animal nature, human nature, the nature of memory, language, empathy, the nature of dominance, sexuality, rape, violence, love, hate, the nature of our sensory engagement with the world, the nature of poetry, and the importance of death to life are all worth the trip, even if the pay off may leave you cold.

Dunno when I'll get back to this, but I intend to read it again someday. Maybe soon. Maybe not.

Paul Bryant says

Hmmm, a whimsical wager by two Greek gods lounging around in a Toronto bar? Eugh. Fifteen random dogs given human intelligence to see if this will make them happier or not? Yeuchhh. So we're not in Kansas anymore? Nope, we're smack in the middle of Tweeville.

Alright, so when you get over those two hurdles, it then becomes sweet and quite compelling, but also confusing, irritating, incoherent and mawkish. If you want to shed tears over noble dogs leading lonely lives pining for their old owner to return which they can never do because plot spoiler plot spoiler, or old blind dogs crossing streets by sense of smell alone, okay, you came to the right place. Gee whiz, at times this is like a postmodern Incredible Journey

(except no cats.)

Andre Alexis has his cake and eats it all the way through this entertaining, short, soulful but slightly dodgy novel. He changes the rules about the dogs-with-human-consciousness as it pleases him. Consistency is the bugbear of little minds for Andre Alexis. For instance, the case of Majnoun, the black poodle whose story takes up most of the book. He is adopted by a nice couple Nira and Miguel. When he reveals to her that he can talk in a kind of approximate English Nira freaks out badly and schleps him right back to the vets clinic whence he came. A realistic reaction, one may think. But they go back and get him again, and later, after some months, he becomes Nira's best friend and confidante, and she has completely accepted his human intelligence; indeed, they have complex, speculative conversations :

There were other problems that, Nira assumed, had their origins in Majnoun's culture as opposed to his nature. For instance, she thought it distasteful for male dogs to mount females en masse, each waiting his turn. Majnoun did not even pretend to take her distaste seriously. A bitch in heat was a bitch in heat.

And so forth. Now, I must say this is *an unrealistic reaction* to Majnoun's intelligence. At no point does Nira realise that a thinking, nay, contemplative dog is an epochal, newsworthy – not to say million-dollar – event. So, you know that our author is not interested really in any kind of realistic stuff here, just in tootling round various philosophical or sociological or cultural points to ponder and using thinking dogs as his peg.

Most of the time this is conducted with insouciant grace and I really did enjoy the violent tale of the undoing of the pack led by Atticus (an imposing mastiff with cascading jowls) but occasionally it all gets really very groanworthy :

It was at this time that Atticus began to pray. He already had a notion of what an idea or pure dog might be : a creature without the flaws of thought. As time went on he attributed to this pure being all the qualities he believed to be noble: sharp senses, absolute authority, unparalleled prowess at hunting, irresistible strength. Somewhere, thought Atticus, there must be a dog like this. Why? Because one of the qualities his ideal canine possessed was being. An "ideal" dog that did not exist could not be truly ideal. Therefore, the dog of dogs, as Atticus conceived it, had to exist.

This is a really crass shoehorning in of the theological argument first proposed a million years ago by I dunno St Augustine or Thomas Aquinas, one of those beardy types, I guess I could google it. Could be students of hmmm Saussure or Popper or Lacan would be groaning in other places as they see their most familiar debating points popping up in this or that dog's debates.

But heck, this is a quick, entertaining book which succeeds in being different and not boring, so three stars for Fifteen Dogs.

BookLover says

Not sure what to say about this book. It did impact me deeply, though probably not for the same reasons the author intended. This was a mostly dark and bleak look at humanity. To be honest, I found it quite upsetting.

The premise of the book (a bet between gods whether 15 dogs, gifted with human consciousness, would die happy) meant seeing each dog through to it's death. I generally don't like stories, whether they be books, tv shows or movies, that take us on the full journey to death. It nudges all of my unresolved feelings over mortality and leaves me feeling anxious. Add to this the fact that these fifteen dogs did not have great lives and I just felt somewhat sick while reading, mixed in amongst vast amounts of crying.

This was well written and thought provoking, but I can't help but feel a little resentful for these dark themes and images that have pierced my happy bubble.

Chris says

Woof.
Woof woof wruf wuf.
Woof woof.
Grrrr.
Wruf wuf.
Whimper.
Goddamn it. Fuck you, Apollo!
Woof wuf.
Wuf.

sobs uncontrollably

Translation to follow once I stop crying.

P.S. Wrrruuff woof Giller Prize wuf.

Matthew Quann says

[4.5 Stars]

Second Book of Alexis' Quincunx

CANADA READS 2017 WINNER: CONGRATS TO ANDRÉ ALEXIS!

In 2000, the Baha Men famously asked, "Who let the dogs out?" Little did they know that it would be over a decade before Andre Alexis would answer that question in his Giller Prize-winning novel Fifteen Dogs.

Alright, alright, Fifteen Dogs has nothing to do with that significant piece of musical culture. The unique,

heartfelt, and surprisingly philosophical *Fifteen Dogs* is a beautiful novel, through and through. The premise is as follows: Hermes and Apollo are having a discussion over a few pints in a Toronto bar when a wager is suggested. The gods will grant fifteen dogs human intelligence and wager on the unlikely event that one of the dogs dies happy. It is then that the reader meets the titular fifteen dogs as they come into consciousness. Despite a seemingly immense cast for a novel under 200 pages, many of the dogs meet untimely ends early in the novel and a few hounds rise to be the book's leads. The dogs' perspectives in the novel are revelatory. These are not just dogs that can think like humans, they struggle with their canine nature amidst these newfound mental capabilities.

Though the plot may seem outlandish and slightly juvenile, the novel's aspirations are lofty. Alexis grapples with the very questions that have plagued humanity for all of our existence (source pending): what does it mean to be human? What is love? Would we find faith without being led to it? These topics and many others are covered in believable and realistic passages as the dogs each decide on different paths in their lives. Of particular note is the humor and realism that Alexis creates as the dogs puzzle out the behavior of humans. These scenes are equal measures hilarious for the dogs' misinterpretation of human activities and profound as the dogs come to grips that they are similar but separate from the rest of society.

I can't honestly think of a book I've read that is quite like *Fifteen Dogs*. Alexis' writing is confident, the characters are believable, and his situations naturalistic. The book is filled with wit, and the unique perspective of the dogs provides a reading experience that is quite unlike anything else I've encountered. What's more, as far as award-winning literature goes, *Fifteen Dogs* is not excessively challenging, but highly rewarding. If you're embroiled in a heavy work schedule or a daunting academic semester, *Fifteen Dogs* would make a fine choice.

*Update February 2017: I've decided to pass on most of this year's Canada Reads selections after being disappointed with the 2016 selections and having lots of reading on my plate. With that said, and having read none of the other selections, I'd recommend spending time with this one!

Wanda says

An interesting novel, which has obviously caught the attention of a number of Calgarians. I had to wait a very long time to get it from our public library and when I returned it this morning there were 543 people waiting their turn. It reads quickly, despite the fact that it is jam packed with ideas.

If any of you have read Jo Walton's *The Just City*, this book has a similar feel, with the Ancient Greek gods intervening in the lives of 15 dogs—giving them human consciousness and wagering on whether they will be happier or unhappier with this addition by the end of their lives. The Ancient Greeks believed that a person's life could not be judged until after death—one could live a wonderful life, but die an awful death and thus be a failure. Hermes and Apollo seem to generally agree with this style of evaluation.

Also contains echoes of Orwell's *Animal Farm* in regard to the dogs' negotiations of relationships with humans.

Nominally about dogs, the book actually explores what it is to be human. Are we happier than the other animals on the planet? Or does our awareness of the past and the future entail a burden? How do we judge a life to have been a happy one?

Hanneke says

It felt like I was under a magical spell to read this novel about a pack of dogs who were granted the power of human speech and thought. The gods Apollo and Hermes made a bet on whether the fifteen dogs would end up their lives as happy or miserable creatures. Having human thoughts and feelings proved to be mostly unfortunate, if not dangerous and bewildering for the dogs. Only a few dogs experienced friendships with humans and developed an appreciation of beauty. The majority of the dogs preferred to violently oppose to it, but realised at the same time that they could rationally made that decision which, in itself, was not really doggie-like behaviour.

Allow me to quote a few poems of the poetical dog Prince who had the misfortune to realise that his poems would be lost forever upon his demise, as he was the only dog in history who ever wrote and recited poems.

"The lake comes to the fringe
While lights go up around the bay.
Somewhere near, cow flesh is singed.
Smoke floats above the walkway.
I've eaten green that comes up black,
Risen cold from torrid mud.
I've licked my paws and tasted blood.
What is this world of busy lies?
Some urban genie feeding food to flies!"

Prince's last poem:

"What is the name of he who comes
With eyes closed and fingers black,
The one who draws the curtains back
When dawn has come?
'Agha Thanatos' or just plain 'Death'?
When will I know which is right?"

I thought those poems of Prince are wonderful!

It is certainly very revealing to have humans watched and commented upon from the point of view of dogs!
Andre Alexis wrote an extraordinary and also touching tale.

Thanks to Roger Brunyate for pointing out this book to me!
