

Just Past the Roy Y

(On the way to the horse vet, I left this note on a telephone pole.)

You didn't have a collar

You and your friend were headed west.

Had you worked sheep?

Your pads hard and rough,

Straw in your coats.

What happened, little dogs?

Where were you running from?

Where were you running to?

One with a crooked blaze

One with a bald face.

Car hit one of you.

In the middle of the two-lane highway,

You lay on the double yellow line.

Your friend had gone back to your side

And was hit as well.

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What do people see as they pass?

Woman dragging dead dogs off the road.

One guy honks his red truck horn at me.

What do they see?

A guy stops.

He is pulling an empty stock trailer.

His living dog glances at my living dogs, through one window into another, then out at us.

We look at our dogs, then a resolute unwavering meeting of our eyes.

The man says nothing.

Gets out a shovel from the back of his pickup.

He helps me drag the dogs to the edge of the forest.

He digs a hole.

We put the dogs in, side by side.

Two black-and-white sheepdogs.

Like ours.

I have a wool bag in my truck.

I get out two pieces of wool and drop it down

And it floats soft to land nesting on the top of the dogs.

We say nothing.

The man takes off his hat and goes back to his truck and
drives off.

What do they see, the people who drive past?

I get back into my truck

I pat my dogs.

I know what that man and I saw.

A good partner

Long dead.