

woof

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 01 Mar 1998

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/387>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Alice Turner — 01 Mar 1998, 20:03

We had a long and very enlightening discussion of "Tracking Song" a few months ago. I had a new thought about it last night, literally as I was lying in bed falling asleep.

I think the narrator is a dog, specifically a domestic dog who has fallen out of (or ejected from) the car his humans are riding in. The fall gave him amnesia, favored plot device of writers. How can you tell he's a dog? He has the marks on his neck of a leash or collar; a "birthmark" that goes "from one side of the hair on the back of my neck to the other." He only comes up the shoulders of the Wiggikki, who are wolves (few dogs are as large as a wolf). When he finally meets the proprietors of the Great Sleigh, they are angels. What dog owner is not an angel to his dog?

Of course, I'm not saying the narrator is a dog literally, but in the same sense that the Wiggikki are wolves, and so forth. The robots obey him because he is "human," not literally, but of all the human-like animals they encounter, he is the most human; more human than Mantru, who is a-human or ex-human, mostly likely a homunculus (in the TBotNS sense). The narrator does exactly what you would expect a loyal dog to do: find his masters again; though, being a dog, he's distractable on the way. He eats the artificial food because it's what a dog raised on kibble would be used to (the moral dimension aside).

Again, I'm not claiming this story is the dream of a dog, but that that the narrator fills the dog's role in the story.

What do you think?

I was a major participant in that discussion---I got quite obsessed with it for a while. And I'm quite taken aback by this new thought---and quite taken with it too. This is one of those interpretations that I think the author may never have thought of, and that may yet have truth. I'm going to think about this for a while. Viz, I had thought about writing about this story, but I could never find a hook that satisfied me. Why don't you think about writing about it instead? I can help--I help with this sort of thing for a living.

-alga-