

8/20

Mr. Slaton White
Field & Stream
2 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10016-5695

Dear Slaton,

Here's another caption for the "One Shot" photo of a Brittany chasing a flushing pheasant. In fact, here are two more captions -- one from the human's point of view, one from the dog's. I think the human voice works better because, well, people are more articulate than dogs. But the human is out of the picture and has to be assumed. ~~We know what the dog is doing.~~

Yours,

Enclosed: "The Long Hunt" from two angles

8/20

Datus Proper
1085 Hamilton Road
Belgrade, MT 59714
(406) 388-3345

THE LONG HUNT

(from human's point of view)

127 words

belated at F+3

[Your day hangs on this moment, if you think about it, so don't. Ignore the fuss and feathers. Forgive the pup for breaking point. Focus above the pheasant's straining wings, curving tail, feathers like church windows. There is ^a circuit in your brain that will capture all this and replay it tonight at the edge of sleep.

For now, let instinct break like a dam. Abandon restraint, regret, patience, civilization. Never mind the work you put into the land to make it fit for wildlife. And above all forget economics, because you have sunk your investment in these sunny fields.

Feel like your dog. Be your dog, sore feet forgotten. Raise your gun. Swing through white ring on green neck. Throw your soul and an ounce of shot.

8/20

Datus Proper

THE LONG HUNT

(from dogs' point of view)

167 words

Long day, feet sore, no birds yet. But something smells good in that patch of wild roses. Forget thorns -- you're going in.

Here's where the pheasant hid. Now he's ^{Making} running, scent-trail winding out of the prickles, through stubble, into weeds, out other side, doubling back. But he can't lose you.

Sudden hot scent. Bird holding. Point.

Thump thump thump. That's your human trotting, circling in front of you, man smell strong upwind now but pheasant scent fading. Bird ^{sneaked} ran out again.

Never mind. You can run as far as any rooster. Over the hill, down other side, scent leading to thicker cover. Whoa. There. Almost too close. Don't move. Don't even pant.

Thump thump puff puff. Your human is looking for you. Sees you, circles wide, comes in upwind, sweating in your scent cone. Pheasant is between you two hunters. Flushes fast, wings straining, tail curving, one feather coming loose.

To hell with patience. Charge! ^{You will} ~~You want to~~ be right there when that rooster comes down.