

I would go on the rollercoaster because my dog insisted. He'd sit up excited and bark his little terrier bark all the way. I hated it. I'd find it completely terrifying, and I would usually have to find some bushes to shit in right after. He'd put his head on one side and look at me to ask whether he should have brought a persony bag to pick up after me. Dogs weren't allowed on the rollercoaster, of course, so I had to put him in my backpack and hold it firmly on my lap, zipped up, until the roller began to coast, when I'd unzip and he'd outpoke.

When we'd done it eight or nine times I opened my eyes, just quickly. We were on a long swooping descent and he was barking like mad. The sea was to our left, twinkling away for ever and there were birds, seagulls, below us. We came down on the gulls like hungry eagles and the joy in his bark was overwhelming as the gulls got nearer and then shot away ahead of us. That was the bark that he used on the beach, when I let him off the leash and he rushed near the crashing waves and shocked the gulls into sudden flight, then followed them woofing until they were well away. A dog participating in flight. I could smell the sea; I could see the glint of the waves and the acceleration of the gulls.

I looked at him, ears pricked right up, eyes shining, nose quivering, and shouting delight at the birds. I joined in. I heard, I smelt, I roared at the white spreading wings until the moment that they swooped away from us, and then I watched them escape, or rather watched the precise distance between them and us as it grew, as if I could leap that precise distance into the air after them.

Then they were gone, and the rollercoaster was climbing another hump for another descent. My eyes stayed open. I opened my mouth, and howled through my teeth; I felt legs pounding as we raced through the light beside the sea in pursuit of something we would never catch.

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