

# Old Dogs

*lessons in loving & ageing*

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER DERRETT



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## IN THE BEGINNING

He came romping towards me that day on the pier like a big brown bear with dreadlocks hanging almost down to the ground.

‘What a magnificent creature!’ I said.

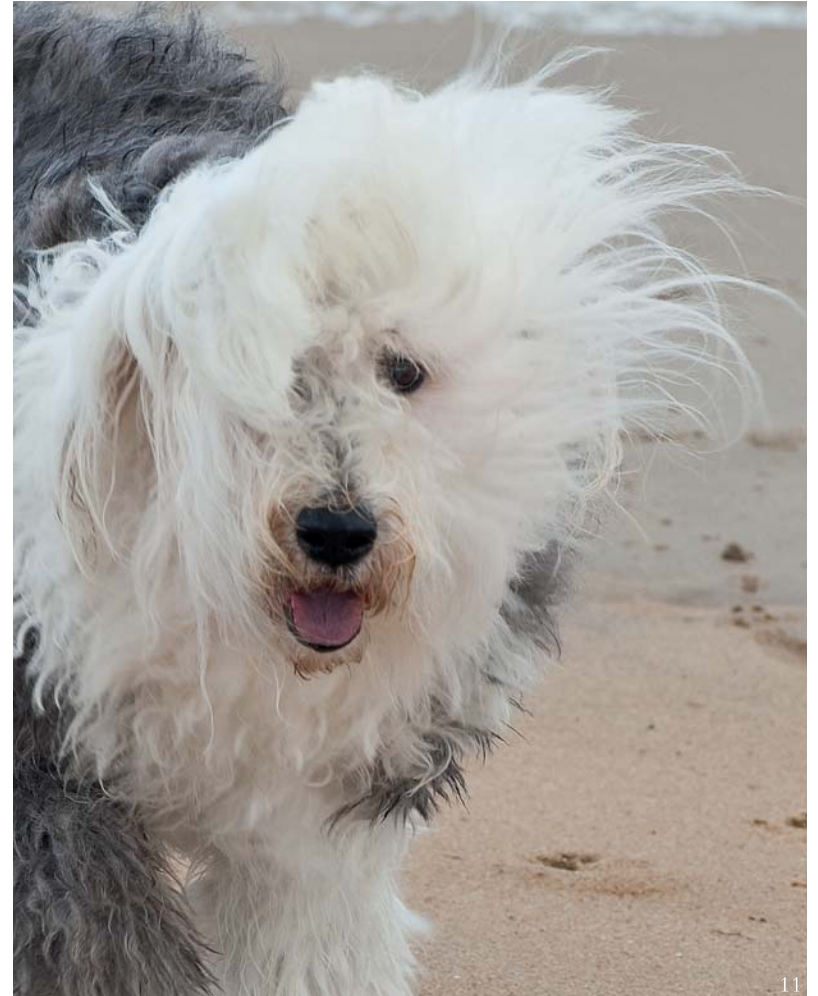
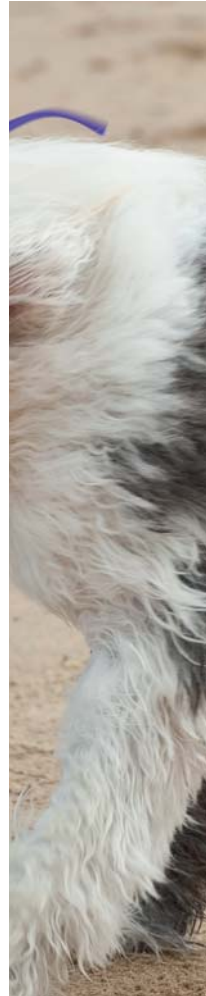
‘He is,’ said the owner, ‘but I have to find him a new home.’

‘I’ll have him!’ I said. And that’s how it all began.

He was a three year old Poodle named Bran after the mythical Irish god of the sea. It was a very good name for a dog who loved swimming but when our children saw how besotted and just plain silly we were with him they called him *All-Bran*. ‘No way!’ we said and he became Brando with absolutely no connection to method-acting Marlon except for being the big star of our lives.

Brando was with us through all the happy times and hard times that come with second marriages and blended families and if he was sometimes wild and disobedient that was probably around the time my mother died and he needed a firm hand

OLD DOGS  
teach us new tricks  
like how to throw sticks  
and FETCH them  
OURSELVES.



And how to  
dawdle at the lights  
while contemplating  
CYCLISTS in LYCRA  
and their  
TIGHT ROUND BOTTOMS.





More importantly  
they teach us PATIENCE  
which is a DOGLY VIRTUE  
inspired by a Dog called Job  
who remained steadfast through  
disasters and was BLESSED.

And they teach  
FORBEARANCE  
which is similar to patience  
but involves a lot of WAITING

