

## The Kept

The man of the Humane Society has again dressed his dog  
in the New Year's paper hat and Hollywood sunglasses.  
He has done this four times and he will do it four more  
before the dog's day is done.

His Society's booth is next to mine at this annual exhibition  
and he is showing people how they can train their animals too  
to perfect obedience.

Throughout the performance the dog sits, stands, walks, and  
jumps —  
there is never any mention of a heel —  
and obeys as I have seen women do at parties  
or men do for their parties when cajoled  
past caring about immediate dignity.

The the animal appears absurd there is no doubt  
in the audience. That the man is to blame there is  
some doubt for giggles of enjoyment bubble from passers-by:  
this is of the stuff they have seen on television  
the shows that claw at their eyes  
the programs they can keep at home as pets  
for talking to late at night  
for guarding away the demons.

What short species have we bred that can have found  
this sideshow funny? That tries to rob the innate  
and replace it with a party fedora?

The Delhi bear, the sunglassed dog, the broken animals  
what are these but the day's fear for its own decline  
the strip of savagery only a garment away  
the keeper mocking his only purpose.

Greg Gatenby