

## On A Big Grey Poodle-Looking Dog

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It was 4:30 in the afternoon on a crisp, overcast mid-week day in early November in Burlington, Vermont. I was driving to my townhouse, which is at the top of a long hill. A hundred feet or so from my destination, on my left, I approached five people clustered talking. Amid them were three dogs, one of which was a big grey poodle-looking dog. As I drew even with the group, driving very slowly, the big grey poodle-looking dog made eye contact with me and maintained it as I went by. None of the people and neither of the other two dogs took notice of me, just the big grey poodle-looking dog. It left the group and started slowly walking toward my car as I crept along toward the townhouse. I turned left at my townhouse, stopped the car a few feet from the garage door and pushed the button on the device attached to the passenger seat visor that opens the garage door and drove into the garage and stopped the car and took the keys out of the ignition. I opened the car door and there was this big grey poodle-looking dog standing inside the open car door, silent, still, just a few inches away, taking up the space I would use to get out of the car. I said hello and petted the dog and scratched its ears and got out of the car, the dog backing up to give me room, and closed the door and walked over to hang up the keys on a hook next to the door that leads into the townhouse. I turned around and there right next to me was the dog. I leaned over and petted its head and scratched its chin and stood back up and said softly, "You have to go now." The dog turned around and slowly walked out of the still-open garage and turned to the right and went out of sight. I pushed the button that closes the garage door and went inside the townhouse and hung up my coat on the rack I've attached to the inside of a closet door.