

# ANNOUNCING THE WINNER OF URBAN ANIMAL'S WRITING CONTEST



## And the Winner Is...

We're really excited about announcing our winner for the first Urban Animal annual writer's contest. When we announced the contest we were unsure as to how many entries we would receive or the calibre of writing. Over a number of months, entries were sent to us and we sorted them into a file for judging. Then, as the due date drew closer, we received a flood of last minute submissions.

When the competition ended we sifted through the entries, reading each one and evaluating the stories and writing. Every entry was different but at the core of each submission was a true and authentic story. I personally loved that many of the stories conveyed a flavour of the writer's home or town.

We get calls and emails from budding writers asking to submit a story or feature article. I'm always very supportive and encouraging in this regard. Writing is a wonderful outlet and should be encouraged. And if you ever need a good read on how or what to write then I always tip

people to one of my favourite books '*Bird By Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*' by Anne Lamott. It's a light-hearted and generous read that budding writers enjoy and even over-seasoned writers relate to. Its opening text is now famous and pretty much sums up the not so dark art of writing.

*"Thirty years ago my older brother, who was ten years old at the time, was trying to get a report on birds written that he'd had three months to write. It was due the next day. We were out at our family cabin in Bolinas, and he was at the kitchen table close to tears, surrounded by binder paper and pencils and unopened books on birds, immobilized by the hugeness of the task ahead. Then my father sat down beside him, put his arm around my brother's shoulder, and said, 'Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird.'"*

I really want to personally thank all the people who sent through a submission. There were some great stories and over the course of this year we will be publishing the stories that made it into our final five. Look out for yours and keep the entries for the current contest coming. –

*Lisa Treen, Editor.*

**For rules for Urban Animal's current (2012) writing contest please go to:**

**[www.urbananimal.net/writingcomp/php](http://www.urbananimal.net/writingcomp/php)**

## IS IT REN?

*By Jasmine Moore, Winner Urban Animal Writer's Contest 2011*

The phone rings.

It is my fiancé calling in the middle of the work day. "Are you sitting down? I really need to tell you something..."

This is immensely unusual. My mind filters through a myriad scenarios, each more dramatic than the last. Perhaps his sick hospitalised cousin took a turn for the worse; he's had a serious car accident; three weeks from our wedding, he has decided I am not the one....

"The RSPCA in Wollongong has contacted me. They have Ren."

Huh? What?! "Are you serious?" I reply.

"Yes. I'm dropping everything and going to leave work now. I will pick you up, then we are driving down to Wollongong to collect Ren. You cool with that?"

The phone hangs up. I definitely had to sit down. This was crazy talk. How could it be? Then I get all emotional and start crying. I am not a crier at all. Just ask any of my friends. But that was the way Tomas, my fiancé, found me when he picked me up for our long drive from Sydney to Wollongong.

I had heard all about Ren. Ren was a puppy when Tomas' dad, Arturo, bought him for his only child. Tomas' mother passed away when he was very young, and it was a great idea to partner an energetic bundle of fluff with a rambunctious teenager who had plenty of time alone while Arturo was at work. From what I knew, Tomas and Ren were best playmates over the years they lived in a small isolated farming town.

Not too long after, Arturo become debilitated with incurable arthritis, and was constantly in and out of hospital. In our early courtship, Tomas mentioned that he always tried to take little Ren to the hospital, as this canine member of the family effortlessly cheered up his ailing father. Pets, unlike humans, do not need to project false hope and tell obvious white lies. Inevitably, after a long spell of difficult illness, Arturo passed away, and a young Tomas, just barely out of his teens, was left to fend for himself in the world. In the midst of all the heartache, the only compensation was that Tomas had Ren for company. Ren was family. Ren allayed the loneliness.

Personally, I believe that Tomas' responsibility and love for Ren was what kept him waking up each morning after his life tragedy.

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