

## The Dead End Street

by Ana Molestina

The first night she could hardly sleep. The creaking of the windows and the dog barking in the neighborhood constantly woke her up. A week before, she had decided that her son should not use his stroller anymore. He was 6 years old. That day was a beautiful and sunny day. She told him to go outside to observe that their house had a number. Since he liked numbers and letters, she convinced him to go out without his stroller and walk. She showed him how each house had a number and the name of the streets. The boy was fascinated with the discovery of his home address and managed to walk a block back and forth of the dead end street.

The third day of going out without his stroller was a cloudy day. The weather got colder and windier. While they were walking, a small chihuahua dog appeared barking and began to chase them. The windows of houses around them looked like speakers intensifying the dog's barking. The gray colors of the sky turned black, and the only thing visible was that horrible dog that transformed into a giant monster ran behind the little boy. While the boy ran desperately, he was covering his ears. His distraught mother began to run after him to try to calm him down. The dog owner laughing from his house yelled:

“My dog won't hurt you, stop the drama!”

After that, the dog disappeared. The broken and deformed streets that made up the block which they had walked before had become an even longer path back home. When the mom and the boy finally came back home, the only thing the boy murmured with difficulty was "no more." He felt completely overwhelmed. He lost control of his behavior with rocking, head banging, and making noises while he was crying and screaming. His mom gave a hug to calm him. Both tried

to take deep breaths several times. When the little boy began to calm down, his mom gave him pop tubes to play.

While the boy was playing with the pop tubes, she called animal control to report her neighbor's dog acting like it was the owner of the street. Late into the night, the barking began again. This time each bark was louder. In the hallway outside she heard the floor creak, as if that damn dog was roaming inside her house. The next day, the mom woke up his son to go to school. The school bus was outside waiting for him, but the boy did not want to go outside. She did not force him, but she wanted to apologize to the bus driver. When the mom was outside to explain to the bus driver what happened the day before, she saw her fat neighbor coming. After the school bus left, the fat damn neighbor came closer and told her:

“The next time that you call the animal police something could happen you or your son.”

“My son is a child with autism, and your dog made everything worse,” she shot back.

“You have been warned.”

She was furious feeling impotent. Her son lost days of school and his therapies. Each day got worse. All days are black with speakers everywhere echoing more of the powerful barking of the neighborhood's dogs. One day, she decided to make cookies laced with poison. At midnight, she threw cookies into the yards of every house where she knew there were dogs. She did not want to hear their barking anymore. Every time she heard their barking, she felt pangs in her heart and head. When she came back home, she cried days worth of tears. She wanted to observe her son sleeping. After that, she began to think that she was not setting a good example for her son. She did not want to be a killer. She decided to knock the doors of every neighbor saying that she saw someone throwing something outside the houses. When she came back home, all the lights of the house were turned on. She was mesmerized at seeing again the true colors of her

home. The dark colors around her seemed to have disappeared. The kitchen was the brightest lit. Sitting down, her son was eating some of poisoned cookies that she left on the kitchen table. Time stood still as she could not move. When the boy felt the presence of his mom, he smiled at her. She then sat next to him and began eating the poisoned cookies with her son. Finally, they did not have to worry about hearing or seeing dogs again.