

*receiver, in one motion, and never stops talking.*) But it's like yesterday: I'm getting a coffee, and this little boy and his mom are in line behind me, and they have this puppy. So, I'm standing there minding my own business, and I hear the mom say to her son: Why don't you go show the puppy to that sad man over there — maybe the puppy will cheer him up! — and I am really trying to ignore this, but now the puppy is sniffing at my boots and the little kid is saying: Hi, Mister, you look sad — do you want to pet my puppy?

And what I THOUGHT — what I didn't SAY, even though I wanted to — what I THOUGHT was:

You bet I do, sonny boy — I want to pet your little puppy — and then I want to take him for a nice walk, a little hike in the mountains with you right by his side — and as we approach the rugged vista which is our destination, I want to let go of his leash for just a *second*, just an *instant*, right when the path beneath his little paws starts to give way — and I want you to watch your puppy's desperate eyes as he tries to grab at that ground — but his little paws touch nothing at all, nothing but *air*, nothing but you and your screams and you might as well *scream your heart out*, sonny boy, because THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO for that puppy of yours who is falling DOWN DOWN DOWN into a dark abyss that will NEVER EVER GIVE HIM BACK. *(Pause.)*