

## Summer Ending

Posted on Aug 08, Posted by [Lois Lowry](#) Category [Uncategorized](#)



OKay, so it is only August 9th. Summer isn't REALLY ending yet. But it starts to feel like it, around now. Last night was the last concert of the chamber music festival. When I got home and took Alfie out for a walk, there was an almost-full moon, and the air was cool.

Yesterday he had his first playmate for a visit: a German Shepherd puppy named Sophie, who came to visit with my friend Kay; and it was Alfie's first time off the leash, as he and Sophie wrestled and ran for almost an hour (then the two of them collapsed on the porch and slept, so that Kay and I could eat lunch with no dogs wanting to investigate the sandwiches).

Sophie lives down the street from us in Cambridge so will come to play in our yard often after summer DOES end and we go back home. Alfie has not yet ever seen his "real" home, just this farm where he is learning to chase chipmunks and to be wary of the underground electric fence.

German Shepherds are smarter than Tibetan Terriers, I mention with a sigh. That is why German Shepherds are guide dogs, and drug-sniffing dogs, and police dogs, and win at Las Vegas, and get tenured positions at MIT. Tibetan Terriers...well, they are just fluffy stuffed animals who are a little timid about their own shadows and who like to curl in your lap.

If, god forbid, they were divided into Reading Groups, Sophie would be working her way through Tolkien, but Alfie would still be sounding out Frog and Toad.

Still, they had a great time wrestling, and Alfie did ward off the attempted grab on HIS rawhide ball.

And in the fall, when real life starts for him, Alfie will go off to school. It makes me think of new shoes and hair ribbons, and a lunchbox. September always felt like such a time of new starts for me each year when I was young. This year, I thought each year, I really WILL keep all my stuff in order, and won't doodle on the pages of my notebooks, and never lose my milk money. That never turned out to be true, but each year I did love the promise of it, the possibility of it.



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