

# My partner, the geriatrician



Illustration by Steve Derrick

You spoke to their son  
For such a long time  
And explained why his dad  
Needed a memory care unit  
And what you could do  
To help his mother.  
When you were done  
You hung up the phone  
And sobbed into your hands.  
Partly for them, but mostly  
For your 14-year-old dog, Duncan  
Who has to be put down today.  
You grieve his failing body and mind

And your patient's, too.  
But we do not put old men down.  
Only old dogs.  
You are not sure  
There is a God  
But you allow room  
For a possible dog heaven  
Full of sun and smells  
Always warm and free from pain.  
I suspect God believes in you  
As you are His voice and comfort  
And He awaits Duncan  
In an open field.

—Lynette Lamp, MD