

# SACRED & MUNDANE

ARTIFACTS OF CONTEMPORARY CULTURE



It won't fail, as internet chatter suggests, over concern that the toy will "fall into the wrong hands." Surely the DoggieLoverDoll's cartoonish, Japanime-like proportions and cheery colors will deter those with perverse inclinations. And it won't fail because of the wrath unleashed (pardon the pun) by the neuter-your-damn-dog crowd, who fail to take into account that there are responsible dog owners committed to selective breeding and, just as important, leashing their intact dogs. It also probably doesn't matter that the toy simply won't curtail the urge in certain chronic humpers—dogs mount for a variety of reasons, including the expression of dominance and aggression. Nor is it going to fail because a sex doll for dogs is part of a wrongheaded trend in applying human solutions to human-caused canine problems, such as obesity, depression, and boredom. It doesn't matter a whit that this toy is perhaps the ultimate example of the strange measures we undertake to un-dog our pets' urges to run, chew, bark, stink, and hump.

The DoggieLoverDoll is going to tank because of our own sexual hang-ups. In a culture founded by Puritans, sexuality is often repressed, then strangely expressed. Public breastfeeding is controversial; porn is a billion-dollar industry. Dogs

of course, having no ties to the Pilgrims, aren't given to repression. And while watching our little buddy fulfill his "great sexual appetite" without apology on a public sidewalk pains us, it pales in

DOLL IMAGE | DOGGIELOVERDOLL.COM



## The Pent-Up Pup

BY LOU BENDRICK

*Poor little bastard.*

It's a phrase likely uttered countless times by male pet owners who watch their own male dogs futilely hump a leg, pillow, or even another male dog (*whoa, dude*).

The genuine human empathy for canine vasocongestion is evident in the press release for the DoggieLoverDoll, a Brazilian dog toy that Fido won't soon forget: "Human beings have their hands to masturbate themselves, now the domestic

animals, which have practically no contact with females in heat, can alleviate themselves with a toy designed specifically for them. Dogs have a great sexual appetite and this novelty surely will better their lives."

Although Americans are fully committed to bettering their dogs' lives in over-the-top ways (thumb through any pet product catalogue), a canine sex doll is doomed to fail here.

comparison to explaining to an unwitting houseguest why your dog toy has an artificial vagina.

So, until Fido gets a bedside drawer big enough to hide his toys, he's going to have to make do with the beanbag chair.

Poor little bastard.

## Geese Police

BY RACHEL GRAVES

Win trembles with anticipation when her chauffeur opens the door of her crate. The petite black-and-white border collie knows she has work to do.

Win bounds out, searching for her unconventional quarry, ready to herd. She spots a flock of about a dozen geese feeding on the well-manicured grass of Clove Lake Park in Staten Island. She crouches until her belly is almost on the ground, tucks her tail between her legs, and slinks toward the geese, fixing them with an intense glare.

The geese honk in alarm, first trotting across the lawn and then reluctantly spreading their wings and taking off. Win, her body still quaking, keeps up her fierce stare until the geese have disappeared.

Scaring off the ubiquitous Canada geese that see New York's parks, cemeteries, and golf courses as a year-round salad bar is exactly the point. Joe Kohl is Win's human co-worker at Geese Police, but he is the first to say that, when it comes to interacting with geese, his main function is driving Win from site to site. When he interviews potential employees, Kohl tells them, only half joking, "If the dogs had thumbs, we wouldn't need you."

The number of geese on the East Coast has nearly tripled in the past twenty years. Attempts to keep the birds and their copious feces off of lawns and away from airports have spawned an entire industry of companies with names such as Bird-B-Gone and Goose Busters. Indulging their inner frat boys, goose hazers have tried everything from lasers to fireworks. Geese

Police claims to have pioneered the idea of using border collies, bred to herd sheep along the English-Scottish border, to scare off geese (a federally protected species) without ever touching them. Now the practice is so common that Geese Police lost New York's Central Park as a client in a bidding war, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture employs a staff of goose-tormenting dogs.

But Win and I are both a little disappointed by the geese's quick departure this afternoon. Win's instinct is to gather them up and bring them to a human. I, on the other hand, was hoping the geese would land in the park's lake so I could witness another border collie trick: kayaking.

Because geese often head to the middles of lakes to escape their predators, border collies have taken to the water in pursuit. They do their silent glowering from a

kayak, leaving uneasy geese to wonder how the hell a wolf got so far out on the water.

The geese in the park aren't a problem today, but Kohl has arranged for me to see a kayaking dog, even if the outing is recreational. Win isn't much of a kayaker, so another Geese Police duo joins us. As her crate is opened, Gail whines and shuffles before running toward the kayak. Joe Compton is the thumbs of the operation, and when he is situated in the boat, Gail effortlessly hops between his legs, facing the bow.

Compton paddles around the serene lake, green from the reflections of the lush trees that surround it. The scene is comically pastoral: a man and his dog, out enjoying the day. But though Gail looks relaxed, she is also alert. If a goose dared come close, she would drop her head, hunch her shoulders, and start the stare-down.

## THE BLOODY TRUTH ABOUT ENERGY



*What if power came at a cost to the individual? What if that cost was paid in blood? The premise behind designer Mike Thompson's Blood Lamp is simple: by creating a lamp that can only be used once, users must consider when light is needed the most, forcing them to rethink how wasteful they are with energy, and how precious it is. The lamp uses luminol, a chemical commonly used in police forensics to locate traces of blood at the scene of a crime, which reacts with the iron found in hemoglobin to give off a striking blue light. For the lamp to work you simply break the glass top off, dissolve the powder, prick your finger, and use a few drops of your own blood to power the simple light.*