



All Shook Up

"I feel the Earth move under my feet,

I feel the sky tumblin' down, tumblin' down...."

Apologies to Carole King ("Tapestry" album, with the flip side, "It's Too Late" number one on the Billboard Hot 100 in 1971, listed at #213 of 365 Songs of the Century), but did you feel the earthquake? I missed it altogether, being out on the fair midway cruising for some lunch at the time.

Certainly was an event of some note. In fact, it was, along with a tremor in 1944, the strongest earthquake in the eastern part of the United States since 1897, when there weren't nearly as many people living in the eastern part of the United States to be affected. Heck the most powerful earthquake to hit the U.S. was not the one in San Francisco or even the 1964 earthquake in Alaska that everybody thinks of, but a series of three related temblors in New Madrid, Missouri in 1811 and 1812.. Why do few people know about this or about the effects

that the shaking had? Because hardly anyone lived there. The Mississippi River had waves heading upstream, chimneys fell in Chicago, land rose up, land subsided, islands disappeared; it was disaster but, at least for the third of the quakes, the rivers were frozen and nobody was out on them to give firsthand accounts... and not very many people lived out there anyway--Louisiana wasn't to become a state until 1812 and Missouri not until 1821. It took days for news from the area to reach the eastern states even after many of them had felt the earth move.

This most recent one is another story entirely. Millions live in the areas that felt the 5.8 magnitude tremor centered on Mineral, Louisa County, Virginia. Geologists suspect the Spotsylvania Fault to be the reverse fault in the Virginia Seismic Zone responsible for the agitation, felt as far away as Quebec and Atlanta. The Appalachians are formed of older harder and shallower rock layers than the youthful, more

plastic ones in the Rockies and the Coastal range on the west coast. Facebook reported 3 million postings within the first four minutes after the event; Twitter was recording 5,500 tweets per second. Some even heard about the tremor before they felt it, due to the speed of fiber-optic electronic communication compared to the speed of transmission through various rock strata. Local authorities received 60,000 reports within the first two hours and over 100,000 in the first 24 hours.

There were evacuations all over the place--the Pentagon, school buildings, historic (picturesque, old, shaky) structures, businesses. Boston firefighters were dispatched to investigate reports that a building downtown had started to lean; the manager and a local inspector averred that it had always been like that. Fifty jars of preserved specimens fell from the shelves at the National Museum of Natural History.

At the Smithsonian National Zoological Park--the National Zoo--the red-ruffed lemurs started making "distress calls" about fifteen minutes before the actual event, sixty-four flamingos all flocked together at their pond, the gorillas and orangutans climbed up into their ersatz tree (The orangutans were "belch vocalizing", indicating their concern....Don't we all?) and the black-and-rufous giant elephant shrew was so upset that it refused to come out for the afternoon feeding.

In the words of that seismological singer, Jerry Lee Lewis, there was "A Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On!"

Iva Walker



Puppy Tails

Mialie T. Szymanski

*As the moon goes to bed,
the sun comes up
And here we meet a sleepy pup,
Who was walking through
G-ville one bright sunny day,
Then saw The Villager
and decided to stay.*

Doodle Dog had been thinking about his little friends who were spending their days in the big brown building over the hill being taught all about the big, bright world beyond that hill and beyond their tiny town. They were learning the tools they would need to decide what they wanted to do in that big world when they grew up and were not so little anymore. Some would become doctors or lawyers, police officers or firefighters. Some would become scientists, teachers, librarians, delivery drivers, athletes, actors, or maybe even artists or writers. All are very important jobs! But for now, while they were still little, they were learning the tools that would help them somehow, some way make their mark on the world. Doodle Dog decided he wanted to make his mark on the world too! But how?

The little floppy-eared puppy wandered down the street to think, enjoying the beautiful weather outside. It would be fall soon with its crisp air and crunchy leaves, but for now Doodle Dog's paws pattered on the slightly warm sidewalk as the last of the summer sun soaked through the concrete. A pool of water from a leaky garden hose spread across the path in front of Doodle Dog. He walked right on through it, the cool drops tickling his toes with each step. As he continued on, his little paws left wet prints on the sidewalk behind him. Just up ahead, the water had mixed with a bit of dirt and dust from the road. Too busy smiling at the gentle breeze blowing over the top of his nose, Doodle Dog didn't notice that now instead of just wet

paws, he had quite muddy patches all over the bottom of his toes. He also didn't notice that the wet prints he was leaving behind now blended into a trail of muddy tracks. Doodle Dog DID notice that the further he walked, the more the mud between his claws began to dry and crack, so he jumped over to a spot of cool grass nearby and quickly rubbed his paws on the lawn to clean off the chunks of brown mud. That should do it! Doodle Dog went back to the sidewalk and continued on his way, not noticing that the wet prints he left behind that had turned into a trail of muddy tracks had NOW become a path of paw prints a pretty emerald green -- the same color of the new grass stains on the bottom of his toes.

Almost to the center of town now, Doodle Dog could smell the fresh treats baking at his favorite snack shop. He stepped up to the window and pressed his nose to the glass to see inside the store. The shopkeeper waved to him and held up the jar of homemade doggie biscuits she kept on the counter. She always gave one to the puppies who came her way, but Doodle Dog had no time for a nibble today -- he wanted to figure out how a little floppy-eared puppy could make his mark on the world! Doodle Dog turned away from the window and followed the path down the slope of the hill, the foggy imprint of his nose and mouth staying behind on the glass as he continued on his way.

How could he make his mark on the world? Doodle Dog wondered as he continued to wander, right past all the shops and through town, right past all the houses where the little kids lived when they weren't in school, and right past the meadow and the forest at the edge of town. Before he knew it, Doodle Dog had made his way to the playground on the other side of his favorite meadow. He almost didn't notice he was at the playground because it was very, very quiet with all of the children in school. A few men in paint-splattered clothes were taking advantage of the empty playground and working to fix broken equipment, giving the well-loved park toys some fresh paint for a new season.

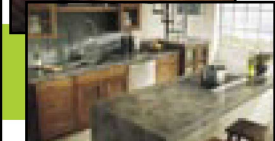
Doodle Dog recognized the men from around town and knew they were friendly to dogs, so he walked right past the swingset and the monkey bars, right past the super-high slides and the giant landing pad full of sand, and right past the plastic fort with its kid-sized picnic tables. Before he knew it, Doodle Dog had made his way to the miniature spinner-go-round on the other side of the playground where a worker was adding a coat of bright purple paint. The man smiled as Doodle Dog came near and continued to pat a brush against the colorful metal. Doodle Dog didn't notice that there was a flat pan of paint on the ground right in the floppy-eared puppy's path...

The man continued to smile kindly as Doodle Dog unstuck his paws from the goop and made his way to the lush knoll next to the park to think about how he could possibly leave his mark on the world, all the while leaving brilliant purple paw prints up the bright green side of the grassy hill.

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