

# Shepherding

Category: Disability

written by Nancy Scott | January 4, 2026

In 1983, I published my first essay, and not long ago, I reached my “1,000 career bylines” goal. As a totally blind person, I couldn’t have done any of this without Braille. Or, without the inspiration I receive from residents and staff of the senior facility where I live.

After reaching my Big Goal, I stopped writing for a few weeks. But then Lily arrived, and thanks to her, the creative juices are flowing once again.

Lily is a college student working in activities at our facility. She brings a steady demeanor and a dry sense of humor. On a Thursday in early December, she and I waited to facilitate a poetry-reading event. Other residents were going on a theater trip. Lily commented that “all the other activity people have become border collies. They are rounding people up.” I laughed and felt a tiny creative nudge.

Lily and I read poetry to a smaller group than usual. I read my own Christmas poems from Braille. And Lily found silly things like Shel Silverstein. It was perfect, perhaps because we didn’t plan it.

Fast forward to this morning: a middle-December Sunday. We got more snow than expected Saturday night. Breakfast featured lively discussion among residents and staff about current conditions. I had my usual coffee mixed with hot chocolate, and my scrambled eggs with ketchup. (I’m really a five-year-old masquerading as a senior citizen.)

Afterwards, I caught up emails with my Blindshell talking cell phone and went downstairs where Lily would read next week’s activity calendar and meal menu onto my digital recorder.

I asked her about driving in through the snow. “The worst part was getting out of the driveway. The highway was empty because no one drove unless they had to.”

Another creative nudge. My brain heard wisdom. What could I do with it? The hardest part is getting moving. Once we’re out of the driveway, we can get to the highway and the to-do list or the next thing to write.

I’m glad Lily shepherded me toward 2026. We will have longer days, robin sightings, several new residents, and the rumor of new patio furniture. I might need one more ream of transcriber Braille paper for the year or two ahead!

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