Swimming lesson and N8

It was a very nice summer and everything felt so optimistic and cheerful. June was coming to an end and so was my hard school year. I was waiting for my dad to pick me up from school as it always happened on Friday. He worked in a school seven kilometres away and it was a routine every Friday. I was getting a little bored standing and waiting. Some kids were being picked up by parents, some were already walking down the street. They were all happy laughing and probably making some holiday plans. After fifteen minutes I was alone in front of my big school building. “Come on dad” I should have walked home. Finally there he was. His funny VW Fox showed up in a distance and was slowly rattling down towards my school. Mum always laughs at it and calls it “ Little tractor” Dad doesn’t mind it however, he gets used to things easily and finds it hard to part with them. The same was with his “new” second-hand Nokia N8 he had bought on Allegro some time ago. We had to listen about its fantastic camera, offline maps and so on. Boring! It was his third phone of the same model and probably not the last one. Just my strange dad. We moved to the country a couple of years ago, to a big house with even bigger garden whose wire fence finished actually at the lake shore. Lubień is a little country town with a busy road running through the centre. There is a big lake, actually two. I think that’s the best thing of our town and our house is very close to it. I remember our surprise in the first early spring here. We were doing something downstairs when suddenly we heard dad calling us from an upstairs room. We ran to see what was going on and we stopped shocked. Daddy was looking out the window and pointing at a man on a bicycle riding across the lake…in the water. “Jesus Christ on a bike “ dad tried to be funny. Now after a couple of years we don’t get surprised by such stuff. The locals know the lake like fish or perhaps better. The explanation was simple. The ice was thawing but it was still very thick so you could easily ride on it. What we saw was the water on top of the ice but we couldn’t see the ice itself. Living so close to the lake is good fun because we can almost jump into the water from our allotment. Such a big garden has also a lot of advantages (apart from mowing the lawn –my dad’s words). And there is one thing I have in common with my dad. It surely is our affection for dogs. We had three of them. Red- a German shepherd, Figa- Yorkshire terrier and last but not least Crummie- mixbreed of Caucasian sheep dog and saint Bernard. Every each of them unique in their way. Red – brave, agile a bit nervous, in love with my dad, Figa- clever, funny creature that would give away everyone and everything for a cookie. Finally Crummie- huge and I mean true XXL size, heavy and powerful but gentle in character, proud and independent keeping always a bit aside. He looked like a lion with his yellowish fur and a mane around his tremendous head which occasionally would give a fright to people visiting us for the first time. There were many peculiar things about this giant creature. He was very slow-thinking and sometimes a simple command took a good couple of seconds to get through to his brain. For example if you told him to stop he would do it but only after a couple of metres. However slow on uptake Crummie was, we all loved him truly. Soon daddy pulled over and with a happy smile asked his regular, everyday question “How was at school cheeky monkey?” He had been speaking English to me since I was born and actually so he did to the dogs. Just my dad, teacher in his heart. As soon I got into the car my old man started his regular presentation of his Nokia’s possibilities and because we were about to take the dogs to the lake before dinner he decided to record Crummie swimming for the first time. As he claimed the first full movie ever made with a mobile phone was recorded with Nokia N8. Ok why not? There was a story to this model. His first N8 was brought from London by my uncle. It was damaged and no one could repair it but my dad somehow had it done. He fell in love with it but soon left it while on some scouting camp with his students. He got it sent back but it had been damaged by a girl who found it. Then, he bought on Allegro a new fake one made in China and returned it to the seller. He really wanted this model and he finally bought a second hand one and this was it, original N8 as he boasted. Ok but back to Crummie. Our lion dog was about 8 months so it was high time for him to start smimming, especially that his older brother Red loved swimming and it was hard to take him to the lake and leave howling Crummie in the kennels. And our big guy knew how to protest efficiently. When he howled it was really something, it made other dogs all around do the same but he was still the loudest one. So to cut the long story short we had to start taking our giant along and it was really high time, for the sake our peace-loving neighbours. After a few minutes we arrived at home from school. Mum was making dinner. She said we had 15 minutes to bathe the dogs and angrily looked at dady’s smart clothes. “You aren’t going to wear this to the lake, are you? “ her voice was decisive. Smart Daddy, he had been to a teachers’ meeting so he was still wearing a suit and a tie, refused to change into his regular tracksuit in spite of mum’s protests. “We’re going for a while” he said. Right, so there we were at the lake shore, my dressed-up dad, me happy at the prospect of coming holiday, agitated and keen to swim German shepherd and finally having -no-clue Crummie. The big moment has come. There is a kind of clearing in the tree line just off our plot used by anglers and of course us. We don’t swim there because the shore is pretty steep there but it’s not a problem for dogs to jump off it into the water. It’s more or less chest-deep and the bottom it’s quite even. Daddy picked up a stick and took a big swing and it landed far away in the water “Fetch it Red “ followed and soon Red was on his way to retrieve it. Crummie being a year younger than our Alsatian, had a habit of following him everywhere like a shadow. This is what happened also this time. With a big splash he landed in the water…and then something strange that no one could expect took place. Crummie disappeared into the water and there was no trace of him. We looked at each other in disbelief. “No, it couldn’t be, our 90-kilo dog didn’t know how to swim” The next moment my dressed up daddy followed Crummie into the water with a long jump. He looked helpless and funny at the same time diving in desperation to get our big hero out. But Crummie was nowhere to be found in the water which is not of the first clarity in our lake. Soon however something even more unexpected happened. Huge shape, looking like a big wet mop immerged from the water about five metres left from the place our lion had hit the water. It was Crummie cool as usual simply walking on the bottom of the lake. Now everything has become clear. Our dog did not know that in the water you have to swim instead of walking. I couldn’t help laughing. I didn’t know what was more funny- Crummie’s water stunt or a comical look of surprise on my dad’s face. After a while all the swimming team was back on the shore. Everyone completely wet. Dad looked so funny that I wanted to take a picture of him and call mum to share this funny story. He was laughing too but the moment I asked for dad’s phone his happy smile faded away. There it was, his beloved Nokia N8, a submarine mobile phone in his pocket. Crummie wasn’t the only one who had a swimming lesson that day!

In memory of my beloved Crummie.