

A TALE OF TWO BOOKS (by Charles Duggins?)

Marley and Me has been on the *New York Times* bestseller list for a year. The success of *Cesar's Way* has been pretty spectacular too. There's never been more attention to books about dogs than there is in the wake of these two books. As an agent who's had the pleasure of selling a few dog books, I often consider what this means for dog writers.

1. There's a sense of optimism about the success of dog book among editors that doesn't apply to most other books. Publishing people can be, well, a little negative. Maybe it's from the sheer fact that we have to reject so many hard-working writers. Or because of competing mediums and declining rates of reading. But about dog books there's a sense that you never know, you could be holding the next phenomenon.
2. There's going to be a lot of dog books published. Bestsellers always spur imitators. It's a good time to get an editor's ear for a dog memoir or training book.
3. Some dog books will fail. Among *Fido and I* and *Murray and Myself* and *Yuri and Yours Truly*; among *Fred's Method* and *Sarah's Technique* and *Andrew's Process*, they can't all find as many buyers as they hope for.
4. With any luck there will not be a backlash.
5. *But* it's going to be all the more important that a book on the subject of dogs be really, really original.

It's the best of times for dog writers and their agents. It's definitely not the worst of times. But more than ever, the people who will see their books in print—and, more importantly, sell—are going to be the best of the best.

--Kate Epstein, The Epstein Literary Agency