

A Living Love

If you ever love an animal, there are three days in your life you will always remember....

The first is a day, blessed with happiness, when you bring home your young new friend. You may have spent weeks deciding on a breed. You may have asked numerous opinions of many vets, or done long research in finding a breeder. Or, perhaps in a fleeting moment, you may have just chosen that silly looking mutt in a shelter--simply because something in its eyes reached your heart. But when you bring that chosen pet home, and watch it explore, and claim its special place in your hall or front room--and when you feel it brush against you for the first time--it instills a feeling of pure love you will carry with you through the many years to come.

The second day will occur eight or nine or ten years later. It will be a day like any other. Routine and unexceptional. But, for a surprising instant, you will look at your longtime friend and see age where you once saw youth. You will see slow deliberate steps where you once saw energy. And you will see sleep when you once saw activity. So you will begin to adjust your friend's diet--and you may add a pill or two to her food. And you may feel a growing fear deep within yourself, which bodes of a coming emptiness. And you will feel this uneasy feeling, on and off, until the third day finally arrives.

And on this day--if your friend and God have not decided for you, then you will be faced with making a decision of your own--on behalf of your lifelong friend, and with the guidance of your own deepest Spirit. But whichever way your friend eventually leaves you--you will feel as alone as a single star in the dark night.

If you are wise, you will let the tears flow as freely and as often as they must. And if you are typical, you will find that not many in your circle of family or friends will be able to understand your grief, or comfort you. But if you are true to the love of the pet you cherished through the many joy-filled years, you may find that a soul--a bit smaller in size than your own--seems to walk with you, at times, during the lonely days to come. And at moments when you least expect anything out of the ordinary to happen, you may feel something brush against your leg--very very lightly.

And looking down at the place where your dear, perhaps dearest, friend used to lay--you will remember those three significant days. The memory will most likely to be painful, and leave an ache in your heart--As time passes the ache will come and go as if it has a life of its own. You will both reject it and embrace it, and it may confuse you. If you reject it, it will depress you. If you embrace it, it will deepen you. Either way, it will still be an ache.

But there will be, I assure you, a fourth day when--along with the memory of your pet--and piercing through the heaviness in your heart--there will come a realization that belongs only to you. It will be as unique and strong as our relationship with each animal we have loved, and lost. This realization takes the form of a Living Love--like the heavenly scent of a rose that remains after the petals have wilted, this Love will remain and grow--and be there for us to remember. It is a love we have earned. It is the legacy our pets leave us when they go. And it is a gift we may keep with us as long as we live. It is a Love which is ours alone. And until we ourselves leave, perhaps to join our Beloved Pets--it is a Love we will always possess.

Martin Scot Kosins