

Liftoff Into the Light

by

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It's Later Than You Think



His life was quite simple by conventional measures. He went to bed early and stayed snoozing until the first stir of life in the house; a short walk in the morning, followed by a simple breakfast; more napping throughout the day, with an early supper with fresh fruit as an

appetizer. Perhaps some standing in the kitchen to watch food being prepared and dishes washed. The greatly anticipated event of each day was the full evening walk. This was typically done in the company of both parents, and was conducted through the familiar leafy streets of the old town, regardless of the season or weather.

Rocky was a Shetland sheepdog, or Sheltie, as they are affectionately known. As a tricolored Sheltie, Rocky sported a coat of black fur, with patterns of white and brown that would make an artist envious. Born in a small hamlet in southwestern Ontario, he left his mother, Heaven, and seven siblings to live with his human family as a wee spark of just nine weeks old. Rocky had helped so much in raising the two children of the family, in ways that no one could really comprehend. He had lived in four different homes with his family, but the last one in Dundas, Ontario was for the longest time of all and he loved this house the most of all.

The children had grown up into young adults, and had moved on to seek adventure and education as part of the process. Rocky never gave up hope that they would return, even if it was only for a short visit. He would rest in the living room at the front of the house, and keep a watchful eye on all movement within.

He knew each day of the week by its special rhythms, and Sundays were his favourites. For on Sundays, his parents would go for a hike in the conservation areas. On these hikes Rocky sniffed the many different smells of the trees, bogs and crevices in rocks. He loved the birdsong of the Dundas Valley, and observed the web of life in nature. On this particular Sunday, his parents decided to go for a hike in the Spencer Gorge. They climbed up the hill, crossed the hot and flat plain beside the railroad tracks, and entered the cool Carolinian forest. The trail wove up and down, giving beautiful views of Spencer Creek tumbling down below. Rocky's special spot was where Logie's Creek meets Spencer Creek; and this is where they all stayed for a good two hours. He felt the creek speaking to him, in a language that only animals can fully understand. It called him to stand in the rushing waters, to absorb their special energy and to listen for instructions for a journey he would be making soon. He did not want to leave the creek that day, as much as his Dad tried to coax him. Rocky had to eventually be lifted out of the creek, soggy fur and all.

He went to bed that night with the normal rhythms. But in the middle of the night, a number of special beings started to form a circle around him while he slept. They whispered out sweet and mysterious words to him, and sang ancient songs in a language he had not heard in a while. This stirred him, and he cried out to his Mom that he needed to go outside. She jumped out of bed and lifted him down the stairs, and he walked over to the other side of the kidney-shaped flower bed. And in a moment, his legs grew weak and he fell over on his side. Rocky could look down and see his furry little body lying in the morning dew, and saw his Mom and Dad rush out to his side and start to pet him and whisper into his ear.

Rocky could hear his parents' voices in distress, but he also heard other voices. Doggie friends he once knew, other owners he once loved. He felt very calm, had an all-knowing sense of Love, and many things were communicated to him in a number of ways. He saw his Dad pick him up and take him into his favourite spot in the living room, and he saw his small body being placed on his Dad's chest. Both his parents were crying, and both had their healing hands on his chest and head. He saw this for a long time, perhaps thirty minutes or more by the clock on the fireplace mantle. Rocky was readying himself to say goodbye and join his friends in the beautiful place he had gone to; but a shuddering sob from both his Mom and Dad stopped him in his tracks. For now, he could choose to return. So his spirit came swooshing down back into his body, and stood up in a flash on his Dad's chest. Time for breakfast!

A Language Without Words

As the day settled into its rhythm, both parents could hardly believe what had happened with Rocky. He began snoozing a bit more than usual, so they kept an eye on him all day. Dr. Lisa, Rocky's special vet, had told them about a lady with a unique gift of being able to talk to animals without words. Rocky's Mom decided to call this lady, the animal communicator, so they could talk to Rocky in case he might leave the earthly plane some time soon.

As luck would have it, the lady with the special gift, Christine came over the very next evening. She sat down near Rocky's favourite spot in the living room. Rocky went off to take a long drink of water and to check if any scraps of food had made their way to the kitchen floor during the supper cleanup.

His parents called out to him, and although he could not hear well, he got the feeling he needed to come over to the living room. When he came around the corner and saw Christine sitting on the love seat, it was love at first sight. He smiled his Sheltie grin and she smiled back at him. He was very excited and knew immediately that Christine could understand him directly and clearly. Rocky loved his parents but often they couldn't hear his messages or would misunderstand him. With them he tried to let them know what he was thinking by bunting their leg with his wet nose, or using his eyes to give them his love. But with Christine, Rocky knew in his heart that he would be understood perfectly.



Christine was moved to be in sweet Rocky's presence. Her eyes teared up, and she couldn't stop smiling. She said she was honoured to communicate with Rocky, who was a very special being. She said he was much more than a dog; at his essence he was a wise spiritual master. He had chosen to come to earth as a doggie so he could share his love and light as well as wisdom with his special family for over sixteen years.

Christine asked Rocky the questions his parents had for him. He answered Christine telepathically from his mind to her mind. The communication session was recorded so it could be shared later with the two children. Rocky gave specific advice to each member of the family on what they could do to make the world a better place, and also how they could each stay in touch with him after he passed on.

Rocky's advice to his brother about how to make decisions was simple and beautiful. If the decision was the right one, his brother would feel good and his body would feel expansive; if it was not the right decision his body would contract and he would not feel good. Rocky told his sister to keep going with the things she was exploring, like pottery and circus, as she was listening to her heart and to her Inner Voice.

Rocky said he had crossed over to the other side – heaven - the previous morning, to check on the preparations that were being made for him. He had no fear of crossing over to the Light and Love that was waiting for him, but he was concerned that his family would be very sad. He did not have much time left on Earth but there were a few things he still had to do, so he would stick around for a while longer.

Rocky also solved the mystery of why these days he rarely left his special spot in the living room next to the red sofa. It was a special spot that had lovely energy pouring into it with the beams of light that came in from the crescent window and the large bay window. The Light carried guidance from Source that he used to help his family.

Much More Than a Dog

After Christine left, Rocky's parents sat in the living room, amazed at all the things they had learned from Rocky. Rocky seemed happy that he had just spent an hour with someone who could read his every thought, right down to the smallest detail. For a dog who was so quiet, he seemed to have a lot to say!

Things now seemed clearer to his parents. They always knew he was a very special dog, but now they understood that he was much more than a dog. As a puppy Rocky was calm and centered. In fact, it was his calm manner that attracted his family to him in the first place. He only needed one obedience training lesson, after which he walked perfectly with his parents, like their shadow. He seemed to know their desires before they were spoken, and now they knew why.



As many children know, you don't have to be old to have a lot of wisdom. Rocky certainly proved this truth. He knew so much about the big picture of life even as a young puppy, and learned so much more as he aged. Slowing down in his older years gave him a chance to develop patience and grow even deeper into his spiritual mastery.

The family would joke that Rocky didn't think of himself as a dog. Although he liked other Shelties, he was not too interested in other dogs. When they tried to play or pick a fight with him, he just looked away. Many dogs would bark madly at Rocky when he walked by their homes, as if they could sense the powerful energy he contained within his little body. His parents used to joke that Rocky had a protector angel floating above him at all times, and this is what other dogs sensed before they went into a barking frenzy. Perhaps this was true, or perhaps Rocky himself was just one big angel.

So as a few days passed by, the shock of almost losing Rocky lessened a bit. The information passed on through Christine was being slowly understood. Both parents took more time each day to sit with Rocky and caress his white ruff. One day when his Dad was holding him, Rocky snuggled into his chest, his Dad had a profound realization. Rocky the spiritual master could have come to Earth in many other animal or human forms. Perhaps as a great eagle, flying high above the Earth, spreading love to all that lay below him, or as a great teacher, spreading truth about life and its real meaning. But this family would never have had the direct experience of living with him daily and experience the depth of his great love if he had chosen one of these other forms. So the great spiritual master squeezed himself into the tiny body of a Sheltie puppy, as he knew this particular family would be looking for a dog to round out their household. Rocky had said to Christine that he had been with this family in past lives, and he wanted to reunite with them to help them in this life. So as much as this family chose Rocky, he chose them too by being in the right place at the right time.

Things to do and People to See

After what happened to Rocky, and what had been communicated to his parents, they knew that they would have to make the most of every day together. They didn't know how many days there would be, but they intended to make each one count.

Rocky came back from the other side to spend more time with them for a reason; there must be things he wanted to do before he would leave for the last time. His Dad went away to spend time with family in California, and while he was there he received an inspiration, from the Cosmos or perhaps from Rocky himself. The inspiration was to write a trilogy of children's books about Rocky. Dad mentioned it to his

daughter, who was immediately excited to lend her artistic and writing talents towards the project.

The first book was an odyssey of older Rocky trekking across North America looking for his sister, who had joined a petit cirque de soleil circus troupe in Mexico. The book flowed out of Dad's hands with silent transmission from Rocky and pretty much wrote itself. The next month, a second book about Rocky's adventures as a puppy flowed out the same way. And a third book came a month later, about Rocky's mid-life transition when he moved to New Orleans for a year.

Beyond the help with the books, Rocky wanted to spend more time with his brother to guide him along his path. His brother was



busy at college in Toronto, and didn't get home a lot. But when he did, Rocky snuggled up to him and connected with him deeply on the heart level. During his session with the animal communicator, Rocky had offered specific suggestions of what his brother could do to accelerate his personal growth and find success in life by being guided by his Inner Voice. He did the same for his sister, even though she already had a university degree, and had found her twin passions of pottery and the circus. Through Rocky's communication, it became evident he had a unique relationship with every member of the family and that he took his role as a teacher and healer very seriously.

Something Rocky had asked for through Christine was the opportunity to go around the neighbourhood and say goodbye to special friends and neighbours that lived around him and cared deeply for him. These were the people that saw him going for walks every day, and who had noticed he was slowing down more and more. So his Mom gradually did the rounds with Rocky and took photos of these special friends like Sandy, Elaine and Margaret who had lovingly cared for him when his parents were away. They had the opportunity to pet Rocky and hold him, and perhaps share a few words and thoughts with him that they could take with them as a memory after his transition.

Rocky's main job for the time remaining was to give as much love as possible to both of his parents. He knew it would be hardest on them, as he was the last child remaining at home; their furry son as they liked to call him. He wanted to be with them as much as possible, to rest his chin on their knee, or give them his trademark Sheltie grin. Occasionally if there was a lot of excitement or if his Mom sang to him and clapped her hands, he would muster up a feeble wag of his tail. He knew he was winding down and would soon lift off into the Light, but he wanted to make the transition as easy as possible on those he loved so dearly.

When the Winter Winds Howl

The Summer ended quickly as it always does, the days shortened and the gardens and trees turned to their autumn splendor. Autumn was one of Rocky's favourite times of the year. But as the days grew cooler, he found the season tinged with a certain sadness of the approaching winter.

There were many challenges for Rocky that particular winter. The first one had to do with food. Rocky had always enjoyed his two meals a day, eating them in his slow and steady way. Now each meal took him several hours to consume. First he would drink the water off the top of the food with his little pink tongue. After decanting the water he walked away for a while and would nap for a bit. Then he sometimes came back to eat some of the solids in his food bowl, followed by more napping. This entire process meant that he would often finish his morning meal just about the time for his evening meal. Eating was no longer a priority.



Rocky still went for a walk in the morning with Dad, and an evening walk with both of his parents. His legs were stretched gently by his parents as shown to them by Leslie, the chiropractic vet, to help him get limbered up for his walk. The walks got shorter as he tired more easily. The morning walk was just around the block. The evening walk was reduced to five or six blocks around the neighbourhood. The pace was now much slower, although he sometimes warmed up by the second half of his walk and at times even seemed to

trot home.

Another change for Rocky was getting up several times during the night to pace on the hardwood floors. Sometimes he would go around in small circles, especially when it was a full moon. This would wake up his parents, who would come down and put him out in the yard. As he could no longer go down the porch steps, they would pick him up and carry him down. The winter wind seemed especially biting this year for an old Sheltie struggling to keep body and soul together.

Because Rocky's hind legs were stiff and he found it hard to get down onto the ground to lay down, he would often take many minutes going around in circles before he fell to the floor in one swoop. This was hard on his old bones and difficult for his family to observe.

As winter progressed he shivered in the cold and it was very hard for him to get warm outside. His parents always put his coat on him and made the outings as short as possible. At times even inside the warm house, he shivered and shook at times.

It was clear to his parents that Rocky's body was winding down. They wondered how long he might stay with them, and they wondered if they would have to help him fly free by calling the vet. But at this time he was still eating a bit and going for short walks, and did not seem in unbearable pain. He was suffering to some extent and so were they. But the decision was made to let Rocky carry on, as everyone knew there were still lessons to be learned from this additional time with his family.

One More Conversation

The winter winds eventually lessened as Spring slowly returned, with snowdrops and crocuses starting to bloom in the yard. Rocky's parents began to feel sadder as they saw Rocky was continuing to decline with each passing day. So they thought, perhaps for one last time, they would call back Christine, the animal communicator.



This time it was like two old friends having a chat, and the insights were recorded as before. The parents sat, transfixed. The first point Rocky made very clear. He stated that the end would come quite soon, but there was no cause for any fear. He had been through this many times in previous lives, and

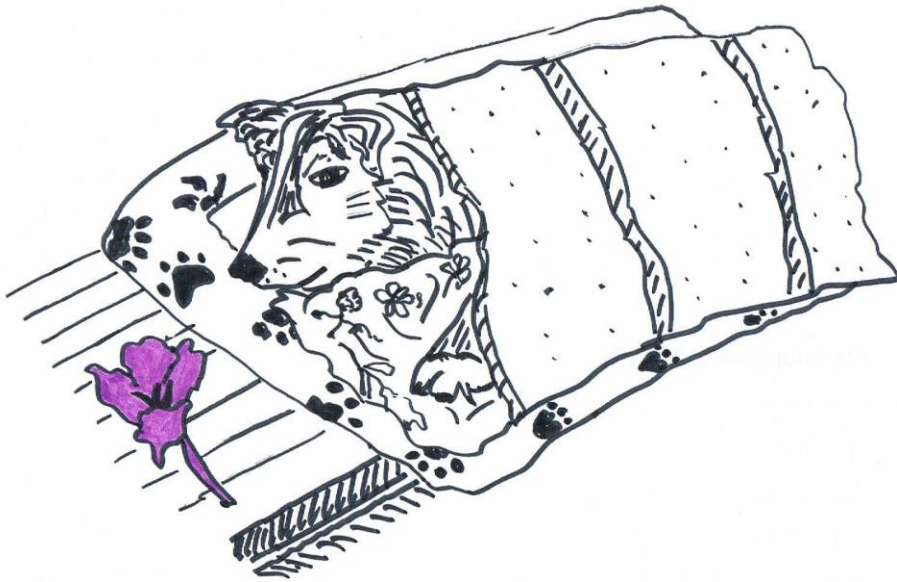
death was not so much an end as like walking through a door into another place. He asked his parents to let him to die in his own way. He did not need to be fixed or cured as his spirit always was and always would be perfect and whole. The events of the past year had allowed him to fully complete his inner healing so that he could lift off to continue his life in an another way. He knew it would be hard on his family, and that the house would feel very empty without him. He said they could call on him at any time, and he would always be there to help. His love would be ever-present and he could help them and others from the heavenly plane.

Rocky went on to explain what was going on during the nights when he wasn't sleeping well. He said that in the middle of the night, his essence would journey far away from his old body sleeping in the living room. He would jump and play with other spirit dogs, running in meadows and forests. The spirit dogs were the doggies of his Dad's childhood, Bootsie, Tiffany and Trixie, who showed Rocky how things would be when he made his transition. All the dogs, including Rocky, were always vibrant and healthy as they played together on the other side.

When Rocky woke up from this experience, he was suddenly thrust back into his old body which made him disoriented and confused. He asked his parents to play some soothing music each night, something calm and melodic, so that when he returned from his journeying the music would anchor him back to where he had returned.

The other thing Rocky communicated was that he wanted to feel the hope of another Spring one last time, as he had been born during this season. He loved the Earth rebirthing, the smells emanating from a warming flower bed and the birds returning to sing in the garden. Hearing this, his parents let him simply stand in the front garden and absorb as much as possible of this beautiful season.

For his final point, Rocky let them know through Christine that although the last few years had been very challenging and hard for everyone, he wanted to thank his parents for making old age fun. With that, Christine left and the parents sat holding Rocky, with tears in their eyes and smiles on their faces.



A Rainy Day in May

The weather was getting a bit nicer each day, in a Spring that had been quite cold and wet. Rocky was still hanging in there bravely. He

enjoyed Mother's Day with his Mom, and just a few days later he was happy to be there for her birthday. His parents were trying to make him comfortable so that he could enjoy each day as fully as possible. Part of them wanted to deny the inevitable and hang on to him a lot longer.

The following Saturday was grey and rainy. Mom went to the gym and Dad for his long weekend run. Rocky was sleeping on his pooch pad on just another day. After lunch his parents were getting ready for their weekly shop, checking the cupboards and the fridge and making up a grocery list. Rocky got up and went for a drink of water from his favorite pot made by his sister. Suddenly his parents heard a loud thud and ran over to find Rocky flat out on the floor and breathing very heavily. He couldn't move and his body was very weak. They got a blanket for him to lay on something soft. They stroked his furry body over and over. They didn't want to hold him back from his transition if this was the time for his spirit to fly. They whispered to him about their great love for him and told him they would be okay if it was his time to go. His breathing got slower and slower.

More time went by and his Dad lifted him out to his pooch pad in his favourite spot in the living room. His body was stiff, and it was like carrying a sack of potatoes. His parents covered him with a soft blanket, with just his head peeking out. He couldn't lift his head, but he would follow their movements with his eyes, sending light and love to both of them as they paced around the living room.

His Mom got on the phone and called Rocky's brother in Toronto, asking him to come home quickly so he could say goodbye before Rocky slipped away. At that point, his parents decided that they would just keep Rocky as comfortable as possible, as there was no need for food or medicines. His brother's arrival cheered him up, and when he was lifted onto his brother's chest, he even mustered up a Sheltie grin.

The late afternoon spilled into the evening, and the brave little dog rallied a bit and was able to stand with some support. He was carried outside where he walked strangely. The signals from his head were not getting to his body. He spent time laying very still and took little sips of water from a teaspoon.

In the night, Rocky got up and got stuck behind a potted plant in the living room. He let out a plaintive howl, which brought Mom and Dad jumping out of bed. They hadn't heard him howl that way since the first night he had come home as a puppy, when he missed Heaven, his furry Mom.

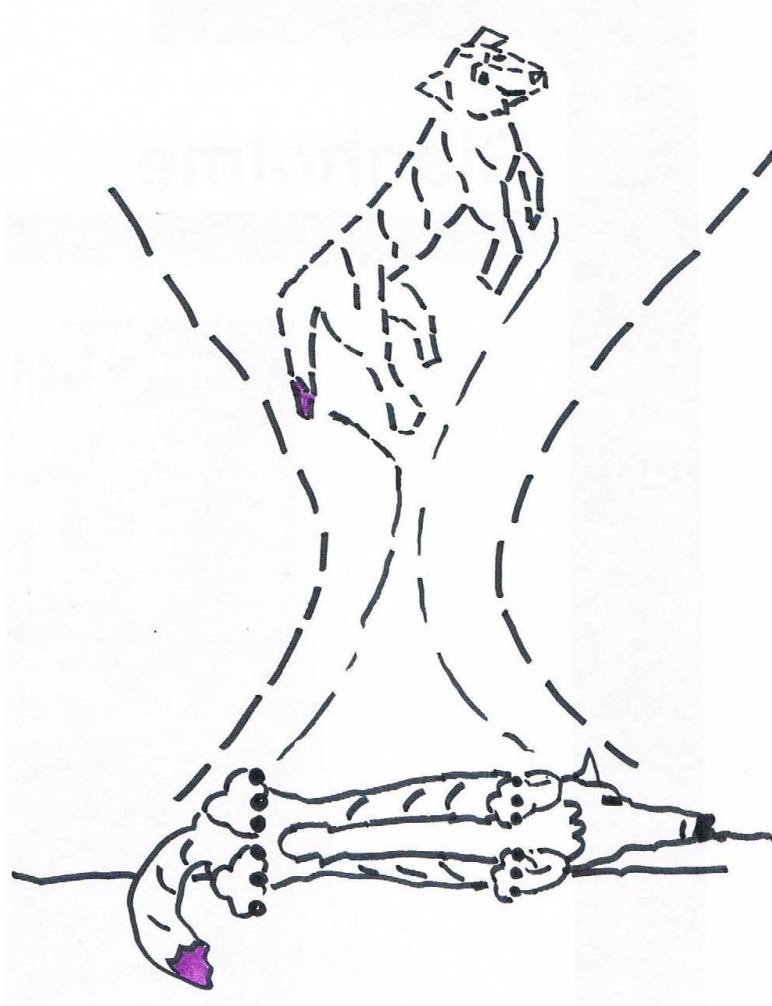
The next day before his brother went back to college, he gave Rocky one final embrace and Rocky wrapped his paws around his brother's arm. Tears were shed. That night Rocky cried out again. This

time he was trying to stand up, but he could not stand. His Dad held him and calmed him, and went back to bed with a very heavy heart.

The Very Last Day

Rocky's parents awoke on Monday morning, with both receiving the same thought overnight. They felt that Rocky may need some assistance to cross over to the other side, but they wanted to get help from Christine to see if she could ask Rocky what he wanted. She tuned in to his thoughts and said that he was definitely ready to go and wanted some assistance to help him.

So Rocky's parents reluctantly called Dr. Lisa, who said she would come over at 5pm. Rocky was kept covered with a blanket on his pooch pad. A magenta tulip was placed by his nose as he seemed to love



flowers. Dad biked home at lunchtime to spend as much time as possible on Rocky's last day. All day Mom and Dad gave him the healing touch of Reiki and Rocky was blissed out by this loving energy.

Rocky's sister phoned from Salt Spring Island, BC throughout the day; Rocky's Dad had to go back into work for an important meeting, but by the grace of Divine intervention, his meeting was cancelled and he came back home right away to spend an extra couple of hours to hold dear Rocky and look deeply into his kind eyes, communicating a silent goodbye and a thank you for a life well lived.

Dr. Lisa came late, affording a few more precious moments of deep communication with their dear friend. She was calm and loving

as she pet Rocky. She asked for his favorite treat, and his Dad brought him a slice of banana. Rocky was then wrapped in a lovely old embroidered white tablecloth. He was very peaceful as he lay on the sofa with Mom and Dad's arms around him. Dr Lisa gave him a muscle relaxant and a moment later another needle that helped him slip away quickly. His jaw relaxed and his life force lifted off into the Light.

On May 16, 2011 at 5:50pm an almost 17 year old Sheltie dog named Rocky went on to the celestial meadow to play with his pals. At that very moment three thousand miles away, a pot suddenly collapsed on his sister's potter's wheel.

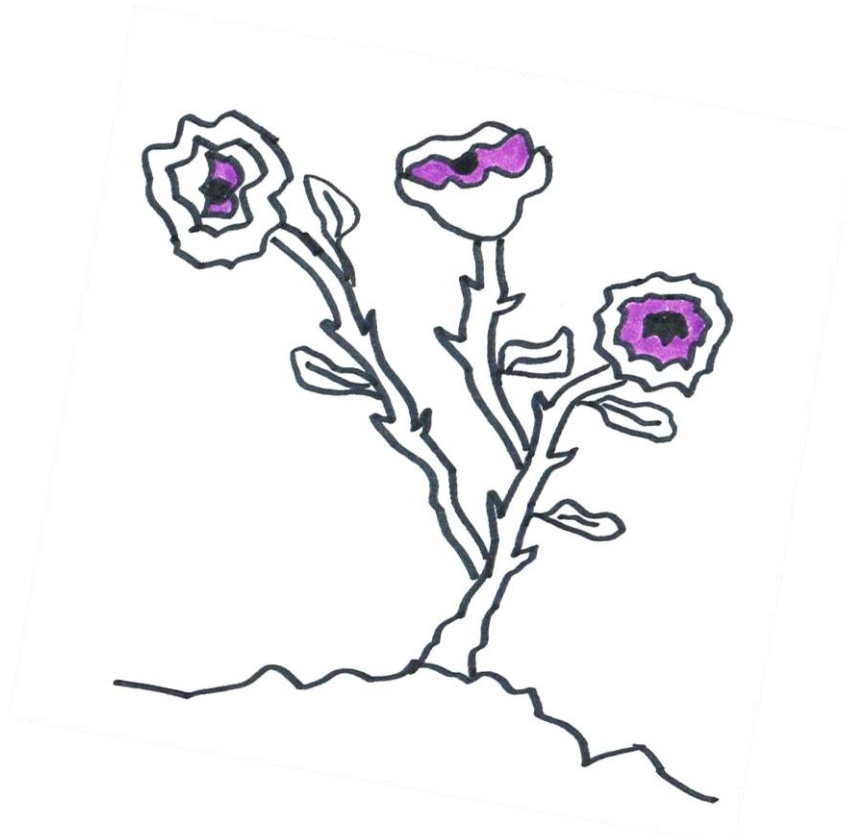
Rocky was carried out to Dr. Lisa's SUV, as his parents sobbed and kissed him goodbye. A light rain started falling. As the SUV pulled away, the St. Augustine church bells began to toll.

Gone But Definitely Not Forgotten

The days immediately after Rocky's passing were difficult ones. As paths crossed with neighbours and friends, the news of the loss diffused out into the neighbourhood and beyond. Many kind folks dropped by with a card of sympathy. One fellow down the street brought a beautiful bunch of flowers. The postal delivery lady, Marlene, was so thoughtful and dropped off a rose bush and a solar-powered prayer candle. The 'Roses for Rocky' bush was planted in the flower bed in the front yard. The stained glass prayer candle, placed beside the rose bush, glowed wondrously through the nights. All the cards and Rocky's photos were woven into a memory album.

Within a few days, Spring finally arrived fully, and many more birds appeared in the yard. They brought beautiful birdsong from the surrounding trees and bushes, and quick flashes of colour. It felt as if Rocky was orchestrating this display of winged beauty and song, knowing that his parents would be delighted

and that this would fill in the void they were feeling.



Another magical occurrence was that a number of the neighbourhood dogs began spending more time with Rocky's parents, wagging their tails, and making eye contact. Mrs. McFarlane's dog Cheyenne who had always looked out for Rocky was now jumping up to be petted. Rocky knew that his parents were severely dog-deprived and he nudged some of these dogs to open up their hearts to his grieving parents.

A few weeks went by, and things got a little back to

normal on the surface, but not really. When the parents would come home to an empty house, they would still call out 'Hi Rocky' and look to the living room, truly thinking he was still there for a split second. At nights when the wind moved the branches of the trees outside, they would awaken and hear noises in the old house. Half asleep, it would sound like the soft strike of a paw on the creaky hardwood floors, or the reshuffling of a furry body on its pooch pad. These were not real sounds, but were dredged from a lifetime of memories, yet they were still savoured in a wistful kind of way.

Beyond the Veil

Beyond the phantom sounds in the night, and the feeling upon coming back home that Rocky was still on his pooch pad, his parents felt Rocky's presence in their lives. He had gone beyond to a place they could not see, but they felt that his love was still with them.

One day after Rocky passed, his Dad was running and with about a hundred metres to go, he mentally called out to Rocky for help. Suddenly he could see the light body of a dog running just ahead of him, and moving like the wind. At the finish line, the dog disappeared and out of a thicket came a young deer.

Another day, Rocky's Mom and his brother went for a walk and stopped at the garden of St. Augustine's church in front of a statue of Mother Mary. They both felt Rocky standing right near them.



Rocky was cremated in a special facility in Guelph, and his ashes came back in a beautiful wooden box. When his sister came home that Summer, the family planned a special ceremony for Rocky. He had asked that part of his ashes be spread in the waters of the Spencer Gorge. Each family member took turns saying their final goodbyes as they let go of his earthly remains. Some of his ashes were spread in the garden near the rose bush and prayer candle given by the kind lady who brought the mail each day. The rest of his ashes went to his sister, to incorporate into

a clay pot.

Rocky's sister brought back a beautiful wooden statue of Rocky, made by a folk artist on Salt Spring Island, which now sits by the fireplace.

That summer, many different butterflies flitted by Rocky's yard, and many more birds than usual came to sing in the trees near his house. His parents understood this was Rocky's way of letting them know he had transformed into a being of Light and that all was well.

~the end~