

LOSING EMMA



The first three weeks

How I moved through my grieving process following the sudden death of my beautiful, joyous little dog.

Her full name —

Emma Joy Princess
Guardian of the Present Moment

— speaks volumes.

A compilation from exopermaculture.com, July 6-31, 2011.
May this booklet comfort others who also miss their beloved companions.

Ann Kreilkamp
June 29, 2015



CHAPTERS

Preface

July 6, 2011

Shock Requiem

July 7, 2011

Losing Emma: The first 24 hours

July 12, 2011

Six days post-partum: Astrology and “the paranormal”

Insert: from November 4, 2010 (tendrepress)

A sisterly visit morphs and morphs again

July 12, 2011

Gratitude’s gifts

July 13, 2011

Post-Emma: How to begin again with this blog?

July 23, 2011

Contemplating Emma: Love’s Abundance

July 25, 2011

With Emma’s passing, my suffering is her blessing

“If your dog dies. Don’t wait. Get another dog!”

— Shirley MacLaine

July 31, 2011

Me and my Shadow . . .

Preface

June 29, 2015

In my 20s I had been a reluctant mother to two sons, who, as a result, did not get what they needed when young. Now, 40 years later, thanks to a small white puppy, this most natural of instincts finally kicked in.

Not only did I have to commit to Emma, I had to protect and nourish her as a mom. This process, for me, proved to be an enormous healing.

When I arrived at the cargo area of the airport and looked in the wide doors, there were two dog crates, side by side. In one of them, an enormous dog was barking excitedly. The other crate was silent.

Already, I was worried. Why wasn't this puppy barking too?

Worse, when I opened the door to her carrier, Emma didn't want to come out, not even to go to the bathroom. So I picked up the carrier and set it on the other front seat so she could see me on the hour-long drive back to Bloomington. I started the car. Then, impulsively, I offered my finger to her through the bars; she sucked on it all the way home.

Our first few days together felt tentative, unsure. Who was this little creature? — until that memorable evening when I decided to watch a movie. I had lifted her onto the couch and set her at my feet, where she settled down.

At one point I got up to adjust the machine, while leaning over her prone body. Without lifting her head, Emma swiveled one eye towards mine. I felt her question: "Who are you? Can I trust you?" *That* was the moment when we bonded — so deeply that it took my breath away.

I'm glad I pushed through my anxiety on that blustery November day. Glad I allowed her in. Glad she accepted me as her Mom. Emma's joyous, vibrant presence ushered *me* into fuller life.

What follows is the story of how life with Emma ended, not even three years later, suddenly and unexpectedly, leaving me to somehow move through shock and paralyzing grief. In the process, I ended up remembering her in a way that I would hope people remember *me* when I die.

For are all we creatures the same? Worthy of love, full of love, conduits of love, and here to share that fullness with all of creation.

P.S. Remember, “god” is “dog” spelled backwards — not the other way around! — A.K.

Shock Requiem

July 6, 2011

Emma Joy Princess, Guardian of the Present Moment, my exquisite little Coton De Tulear puppy, died this morning in my arms minutes after a

freak car accident on our beloved morning walk. She was three years and ten months old.

My son Colin and I buried her in my back yard with her favorite toy.

It turns out that the [post](#) I wrote on July 4th, that included Emma's parade as an Ambassador of Love, was her requiem. I don't know when I will return to this blog. It may be my salvation; it may simply slip my mind.

I feel her being expanding as I write this. Huge, full of light, she came here to experience the full sensuality of this beautiful Earth in a tiny, athletic, balletic body while touching hundreds of peoples' lives. To everyone, young and old, she exuded love and joy and sensitivity.

Emma was my soul companion.

For the past three days, my gratitude for her constant presence has been unusually full and deep. Now I know why.



Losing Emma: The first 24 hours

July 7, 2011

The outpouring of warmth and connectedness via comments here, facebook, email, phone and visits has been nearly overwhelming, and deeply appreciated. While I don't have the energy to respond individually, know that you are loved as the Love of the universe pulsed through the quivering, eager being of one little white dog, Emma.

Here's what happened: we were on our walk, as I said in [yesterday's post](#). She often started behind me for a few blocks, better to pick up on neighborhood dogs' steady tinkling on street poles. I always laughed at

her multitasking talent — stretching her neck to take inventory of that day's harvest while peeing a few drops on each spot. She was also a tiny alpha dog who needed to "get the last bark" when we'd stop and try — and usually fail — to greet big dogs without her freaking out.

Yesterday, she was still behind me on East 7th Street, between Clark and Hillside, on her long retractable leash as I threaded my way through two empty trash cans lying on their sides about 18 inches apart. I expected her to go between them too, and, without looking back, tugged her leash a little bit. Instead, she must have opted to dart around.

Next thing I knew, a whomping sound, and the nightmare of Emma shrieking. She was lying on her side, in the street. I ran to her, knelt down, put my hands on her. She kept shrieking, and as I tried to cradle her she was in so much pain, and I in such shock, that she bit me, three times, on the thumb, before I moved my hand. By this time, I was also being hammered by a tsunami of crashing grief. Tenderly, I picked her up, and, both of us loudly shrieking, started to walk back home. It was about 8:30 in the morning. There was no one around.

A car drove up. "What can I do?" The driver obviously and horribly concerned. "I heard the shrieking."

"You were the one who hit her?"

"Yes."

"It's not your fault."

I asked him to take us to her vet on Smith Road. As we sped away, her cries died down and her eyes started to glass over. She was leaving. It took awhile, but during that eternity's t five minute drive, she slipped away.

He stayed with me for a while, and then, when the vet had not yet arrived, left to go to work, giving me his cell phone number for the ride home. I was so grateful.

Emma was dead. There was no sense staying, but I did anyway, standing next to her still little form on the stainless steel table in that little room, my hands moving over every beloved inch of that cooling furry little body. It reminded me of when my husband Jeff died, how I had washed his body. How my hands had needed to be on his body. How what loses touch with the being who has just, after all, slipped into a higher, finer dimension, is the body. How grief is held, and felt, in the body. How, both as individuals and as a culture, we are riddled with layer upon layer of frozen grief. Unaware of the cause of our constant, low- or high-level anxiety, we medicate ourselves or fall into any manner of addiction in our constant frantic search for a way out. Distractions, endless and obliterating, litter the inner landscape of our souls.

The minutes crawled by. Still in shock, I was nevertheless given clear understanding: that her contract had just completed. That this “accident” was how she chose to go. Quickly, and, but for those two minutes in unbearable pain, almost cleanly. I could feel Jeff’s presence in the room. She felt joyous, as he had, when he passed.

(Later, my son Colin and I went out to dinner. He said he had also felt Jeff’s presence that morning, and that at first Jeff had been reluctant. “Oh my god, what have you sent me now?”! So like Jeff! I was always pushing him to take the next step on his own path. He was (and is) always hooking me to the larger universe. (While incorporated, he had refused to consider having a dog.))

The assistant came in and determined that yes, she had no heartbeat. Finally, the vet arrived, very concerned and sensitive. Asked me if I wanted to cut a bit of her hair. Yes. She handed me the scissors and left to get a blanket and a box, since I did not want her cremated.

This vet hospital is the same one in which another vet, a few years ago, with my cat cradled in his arms, said, his big liquid eyes beaming: “And they say animals have no souls?”

All day, shocky. Came home and called a dear friend, Rhonda. She drove over immediately. After a while she drove me to the co-op for some Rescue Remedy (a Back flower remedy), since I couldn’t find mine, and she didn’t have hers with her. (Later on, a reader of this blog in England wrote to me via email and suggested Rescue Remedy. She said she had used it during a time of grief, and that if I couldn’t find it here, she would send it from there . . . thank you thank you for your kindness and generosity! Luckily, we are still able to purchase this blessed product in U.S. stores.)

From my experience after Jeff died, I knew that the first night would be the hardest. Also, my thumb was throbbing with pain. So I did what I don’t usually do, I dug out an old Vicodin prescription bottle, of which there were still six pills left from an oral surgery a few years ago. Took one pill, twice, during the night. It helped relax me, though pictures and situations with Emma paraded through, all night long.

I noticed that I didn’t have to be careful not to thrash my legs now, since I wouldn’t disturb her sleep.

I noticed that there was no reason to get up so early, since she wouldn’t need a walk.

I noticed that I had hardly eaten anything the day before. And that I did not feel hungry.

I noticed that there were lots of strange sounds in the house, especially nearby, in the bedroom and hallway; when she slept with me I had always felt at ease, since I knew she would bark at any real danger. Knocking, tapping — the strange sounds continued for quite a while. I finally recognized them as coming from her.

A remembered that our cat, Paoli, had sat like a sentinel nearby while Colin and I were digging Emma's hole. Just as another cat, Felix, had stood sentinel when I washed Jeff's body.

I noticed that Emma had burrowed her way into the interstices of every aspect of my life, every minute of day and night. She was at the top of the stairs when I'd come up from putting a load of wash in the machine. She was lying in a nearby chair or at my feet, whenever I sat here to work. Her little face was at the bottom of the picture window, chin on the sill, every time I returned home.

Periodically, every day, she would give a short little bark, signaling that she wanted something. Usually it was a treat. I'd ask, "Do you want a little greenie?" She would lick the right outer edge of her lip, once. "Yes." Or, "Do you want a toy?" I'd dig in her toy box, with her standing by, expectant and eager. I felt for her, the clumsiness of having no hands. And I envied her casual ability to suddenly leap to three times her standing height after a squirrel she'd just treed, and how when at play, she would suddenly turn, like a quarter horse, and duck between the front and back legs of a big chasing dog.

On and on. Memories, and how they embed into routine. My routine was, basically, constructed to accommodate her daily needs. Her needs became my needs. The two of us moved through life together in wordless communion and joy.

Every day, on our walk, we would start out with, out loud: "We are soooo lucky! This is the best day ever!"

Meanwhile, as day one of Earth life without Emma wore on, I could feel her spirit expanding into an enormous sphere, full of light, more intense than sunlight. And I could feel myself, my own little animal self on Earth, located in the very center of the light. Protected. Loved, as ever, beyond measure. As I write this last sentence I cry. Finally, after a whole day of tears, and then no tears all night, more tears.

Yesterday, the first day, not just tears, but lots of howling, the deep, guttural wailing humans make when they acknowledge and allow their animal containers to express. The howling that I uncovered in myself when Jeff died, and that I encouraged to express for the first full year, whenever a wave inside built up. I could feel it, the grief, as a standing wave, building, building, to a crest, and then spilling over, leaving me spent, and at one with the universe. Grateful. I remember being glad that as a new widow I lived alone, and knew no one in the brand new town to which we had moved just before he died. Grateful to howl and not be considered crazy, not have to modulate my grief, to pretend that it was manageable, or over.

When the dear soul whose car thumped Emma came back to the vet's office, as we were carrying out her box I noticed that the car he drove was a Prius. As a reader of this blog pointed out to me, that's why I didn't automatically rein her in when I heard a car coming. *It was a Prius, quiet.*

At the time we were carrying the box, I didn't remember this fact about Priuses. No. What struck me then was that Emma had grown up in, and loved to travel in, *my* Prius, whether it be for errands locally or to Boston where once a year she graced the family of my son Sean, wife Sue, and grandkids Drew and Kiera with her fierce, gentle, sweet presence.

She loved traveling with me in the car, especially after I deemed her old enough to ride in the front seat next to me, rather than in the carrier behind. That last year, for her, riding in the car, was heaven, her little snout out resting on the window ledge, making people in cars idling next to us smile, and scouting, as usual, for dogs to bark at, while picking up a billion subtle scents of which we humans are completely oblivious.

No, what I noticed, was that the blessed executioner's car was a white Prius. As she had lived much of her life in a black Prius, so she conjured a white Prius to be her Angel of Death.

Six days post-partum: Astrology and “the paranormal”

July 12, 2011

Yes, Emma’s “death” was also a birth. Her sudden release opened a gate. I have no idea where the path leads, but it is new and untrodden.

A few weeks after my husband Jeff died, I set up his “death chart,” and compared it with his birth chart. I wanted to give myself every opportunity to weave threads of meaning between the bookends of his life. The experience of seeing these two charts together was revelatory.

Two days ago I did the same thing for myself with Emma.

It helped to recall that she was born during a rare and powerful mutable grand cross that involved Sun, Moon, Mars, Jupiter and Uranus. It helped to remember that before she even arrived I knew that she would require enormous amounts of stimulation, that she would be highly refined and nervous-system dominated, that she would be “accident prone.” Only six months ago, during a visit from my sister Mary, she and Mary’s little dog survived a horrendous, prolonged attack of three pit pulls. I wrote about that [here](#).

Emma meets Sparky

Given the energy signature that Emma came in on, *of course*, she would go out quickly when she left, and most likely, enjoy a deeply thrilling, but relatively short life. And *of course*, on that particular morning when the white Prius delivered her to the invisible world, both Moon and Mars would be involved, their transits setting off the explosive grand cross.

Six days after her sudden exit from my life, six days after her tendrils into every aspect of my being were suddenly yanked out, I am astonished by what appears to be a new capacity to process grief more deeply and more thoroughly than I could ever have expected. Only six days later, and I seem to be once again fully functional. Though the waves of sorrow continue, though the parade of images and situations of Emma still present themselves over and over, they don't derail me. Rather, the waves feel like flower petals strewn from the basket carried by a child as she approaches her first communion. Emma going up to the altar, her life on earth not only sacrificed, but in the leaving, consecrated.

Emma's friends, and even some who never met Emma, continue to reach out. One email especially, from a reader of this blog, opened the gates of love so wide that, sitting there in the parking lot of Target while reading it on my iphone two days after she died, my physical being could barely tolerate the sudden flooding of enormous joy. Here it is, from Dawn Barnesbatty, someone whom I had never met. Nor had she and I ever corresponded.

“Hello Anne, Its raw, I can feel the sorrow in your words. This is the first time I have TRULY felt/understood/known that a connection exists between all humans and it was your angel-puppy who has given me this extraordinary gift. I wish I could reach out and make it better. The only thing I can offer is some distance Reiki. If you think it will be beneficial for you, just reply ‘yes’. That’s all I will need in terms of permission.”

I informed her that her word for Emma, “angel,” reminded me that these dogs are often referred to as “angel cotons.” And of course, to her question, I replied “Yes!” I’m sure that her distance Reiki healings have helped to increase my capacity to move through the powerful primary grief process with Emma.

Before I close this post about Emma, and it may perhaps be my final one, I want to mention something that happened to my brother-in-law and sister, here on a prescheduled visit from Friday evening through Sunday morning.

First, you should know that whenever Emma crossed my path on her way from one perch to another, she would touch her nose delicately to my leg on her way through the room. As if to say, “remember, remember, stay open to Love.” There was no demand in this little characteristic maneuver, simply generosity.

Both Jeff’s and Emma’s departures were accompanied by what others would call paranormal phenomena. Anyone who has not consciously opened to the interdimensional blending that attends such sacred passages might not take it seriously. I had mentioned what was going on to my sister Kristin and her husband Matt, but did not sense that they picked up on the import of my words.

The second and final night of their visit, Matt was suddenly jolted out of sleep by the sensation that something furry was brushing by his cheek. His immediate thought was that it must be a mouse. (I had warned that a mouse had earlier been making noises inside one wall of that room, though my frequent applications of peppermint oil on the studs seemed to have repelled it.) Kristin woke up and they frantically looked for the mouse. No luck. They took the peppermint oil and liberally doused the room and tried to go back to sleep.

A few minutes later, Matt to Kris: “Did you hear that?”

Kris: “Yes.”

They both strained to hear. To Kris it sounded like female voices and footsteps moving up and down the hall. To Matt, the same, except he thought the voices were male. Kris assumed that maybe I was going through more grieving, and talking to myself as I walked.

In the morning, she asked me — and looking back, I’d say now that it was with a sort of studied casualness — how my night was. “Good!” I replied. “For the first time, I slept nearly all the way through! I did get up once to go to the bathroom, but went right back to sleep.”

Well, I must say, both Matt and Kris looked mighty surprised to hear what I said. This was their first introduction to realities larger than the usual three-dimensional one that imprisons most people’s minds and hearts in a vice grip of limited perception and understanding. And were they shocked! Matt told me that when he felt that furry brush against his cheek, he felt a stomach-stopping dread.

I would be fascinated to know the contents of their conversations on the drive home to Seattle. Emma’s spirit continues, not only to open hearts, but minds as well, to the *mysterium tremendum* of which we humans catch, at most, only the faintest of glimmers.

Backstory (originally posted in tendypress.com)

A Sisterly visit morphs — and morphs again

November 4, 2010

From the beginning our few days together felt as if divinely choreographed. Mary and I were plunged into a realm of mystery that spanned the extremes — from heart stopping to heart opening, from easy fun, to sudden horror, to astonished gratitude. But how to begin? With the easy part or the hard part? With the former while tonally foreshadowing the latter? Plunge into the hard part and then look back? With my attempts to sleep the night after the attack when I found my heart expanding to embrace both extremes of the entire episode? With the equally shocking and thrilling denouement?

Since the experience cleaves decidedly into three parts, I'll tell it that way, chronologically.

PART I: FUN



we knew we were going to be in for a treat. Mary, the fourth of six sisters (I'm the oldest), had decided to fly in from Seattle with her little white dog for a visit. And from almost the first moment, we felt as if the two cotons, my Emma and her Sparky, were also sisters.



At first Emma's enthusiasm and dominance overwhelmed Sparky, who seemed somewhat fearful and frail, and of course, stiff-legged from riding in a carrier under a plane seat. Emma would try to mount Sparky, who would freak out, furious — and then, as Mary pointed out, in the very next instant turn and touch noses with Emma. As if to say, "It's okay. I still love you. But DON'T do that!" Within an hour the two of them had morphed into equality, Emma's

slightly larger and heavier self and loving fiery spirit attuned to a newly spunky Sparky whose direct, forceful, and yet subtle way of teaching Emma what was and was not acceptable still fills me with awe.



At one point I furled a large sheet over both of them. What fun! "Where's Sparky? Where's Emma?" Mary and I would cry, laughing, tickling each in turn . . .



Emergence!



Time to stop?



Nope!



n our second day we went for a walk around the IU campus. Here we investigate the nearly dry stream.



hen back home for another round.



e discovered during our forays out that Sparky had a lot more spunk than she had realized in her two years on this earth. When off-leash in the woods she morphed into leader and explorer, leaping logs like a gazelle, eclipsing even Emma.

PART II: HORROR

On the third and final day, I decided to let Mary sleep in, and take the dogs for one more run at the dam end of Griffy lake, a local, and unofficial, off-leash dog run. We were going to take the trail into the woods by the lake, something I'd done with Emma hundreds of times.

As we were going up the dam's wooden stairs, three giant dogs with broad pit-bull type heads materialized out of the surrounding forest, and immediately went for Sparky, nearest at hand. Instinctively, shrieking and kicking wildly, I lunged too, and yanked her out of their midst. Holding Sparky in my arms, I continued to kick and yell like a banshee. Where was their owner? God knows how long this went on, as they circled me, trying to get at Sparky who was frantically turning round and round in my arms, squealing and panicked.

Finally the owner, a slight man about my age, appeared, obviously horrified at what was happening. While trying to call off the dogs, he yelled weakly that he thought he was having a heart attack. Meanwhile, Sparky somehow escaped, and ran away, though I didn't know that then. All I knew was that I looked up and saw that the pack had now turned on Emma, with the jaws of one of them plunging into her hind end. Once again, I dove into their swirling mass and pulled her out. The owner, moving in slow motion, kept trying to call them off, to no

avail. Somehow I managed to keep squealing, frantic Emma in my arms, while continuing to screech and kick like a banshee. There was no fear. Just sheer fury and determination to keep her safe as the three beasts kept circling and lunging, trying to get in close enough to grab her.

I don't know how long the attack lasted, but at some point I noticed that the owner and two of the dogs had disappeared, leaving Emma and me with the third dog who kept circling and snapping, still as determined to grab her as I was to prevent it. There we were, the three of us alone on the edge of the forest, locked into mortal standoff. After many minutes the owner reappeared, and was finally able to grab the third dog. Then he doubled over and started to vomit, again muttering that he thought he was having a heart attack.

Of course, the owner kept mumbling apologies, saying that two of the dogs were his and had never acted like this before, and that the third dog was one that he was keeping while its owner was away. He said it was all his fault, and he was so sorry, so sorry . . . meanwhile, when I got back to the parking lot (a good 1000 feet away), two cars had arrived in the meantime. The driver of the first said he had noticed a small white dog racing up Dunn Street towards town, at least a half mile away. After hearing what happened, he went back to see if he could find her. The other man said he knew the owner of the dogs, and could vouch for him, and that his two dogs — now in the front seat of the owner's pickup, snapping and rushing the window at the sight of Emma (so that's where he had gone when he disappeared) — were "good dogs, gentle and well behaved."

I got the owner's name and phone number, placed injured Emma gently on the right front seat, and climbed in the car. Triage. What was the most important thing to do next and how to do it in a state of shock? Somehow, I managed. First, I would drive Emma to the vet and drop her off. Next, pick up Mary from my house. Third, get emergency care for my own wounds. Then, and only then, would we look for Sparky. Hopefully she had already been found.

While being bandaged myself, I asked Mary, still in the initial throes of trying to absorb the entire situation, to call the animal control center and report a missing dog. On the way to the vet I had alerted Zilia, a good friend who lives in the neighborhood next to Dunn Road, and she started looking for Sparky right then. Within an hour she called to say that someone had just seen a little white dog running up a hill in the neighborhood. Mary, my son Colin, and I raced over there and spent most of the afternoon fanning out to walk the streets and call her, alerting as many people as we could to the likely presence of an injured, traumatized, and somewhat shy little white dog.

As time went on, surprised that we hadn't found her, we grew discouraged, and kept talking among ourselves as to why not. Was she hiding? Had someone already brought her into their house? If so, why weren't we hearing either them or the animal control people, since Sparky had both Mary's home and cell phone numbers on her collar? Had she left the neighborhood? Had she been killed on highway 37, abutting the neighborhood on the west? Or was she in the woods to the east of Dunn Street, the scent of her blood attractive to coyote or hawk? We tried not to think about the more dire possibilities.

Meanwhile, Mary, naturally disconsolate and confused, had to decide whether or not to leave that afternoon as planned. I tried to convince her to stay, wanting to think that we *would* find Sparky within the next few days. After going back and forth for hours, she finally decided that she would leave as scheduled, at 4 p.m. It was hard for both of us to understand why she had made that decision. She did say at some point that she thought Sparky was dead, and that she couldn't prolong the agony. That she needed to try to distract herself. Later, I realized that she is like me, and needs to do her grieving in privacy, alone. She thought Sparky was gone, and had instinctively veered into self-protective behavior.

That night, as you can imagine, was difficult. The attack was my fault. In the interests of helping Sparky explore her nature, I had taken the dogs to an off-leash area, where anything can happen.

In the morning, bleary-eyed with the aftereffects of shock, guilt, and lack of sleep, I opened the outside door to get the newspaper's results of the mid-term elections. A flood of cold air took my breath away, reminded me. A sinking feeling: I doubted Sparky could have survived the night in this kind of cold, given her injuries and no food or water for nearly 24 hours.

All night, I had been beset with flashbacks of the attack and its aftermath. That moment when I snatched Emma out of the jaws of the giant dog just then starting to clamp on to her hind end kept alternating with a vision of poor little Sparky, injured, cold, hungry, thirsty, abandoned, trying to burrow under leaves for warmth and not brave enough to ask for help. Over and over again, I prayed for Sparky to psychically crawl into my arms for comfort.

The fact that the out-of-control pit-bull type dogs had not gone after me, and that Emma and I were still alive, felt like a miracle. The vet had showed me each of her puncture wounds, the worst, under her right front leg, came within three millimeters of puncturing her lung. Another minute or two, and she would have been dead.

And here's what amazes me most: overall, the entire experience, despite its shocking nature, was even then assuming the coloration of a half-lit dream, with endlessly swirling forms dancing in a mysterious, all-encompassing mist.

PART III: GRATITUDE

Just as I walked back into the house from the cold air of the porch and my sinking feeling that Sparky must be dead, as if on cue, the animal control officer called. Sparky had been at the pound since noon yesterday. The police had brought her in. Since it had been election day, the pound had been closed. The skeletal staff there had tried to call the one number on the collar, a Seattle number, but no one answered. Mary's cell phone number had not been on the collar.

You can imagine my joy as I dialed to leave a message on Mary's cell. Sparky had been found. What we had been dreaming of every time her phone rang the day before, only to collapse in disappointment to hear the voice of a family member frantically asking whether Sparky had been found, had come to pass. This was the phone call that mattered, the one that turned the situation around, morphing it from horror to gratitude. We were all safe and alive.

To my astonishment, Sparky had not been injured.

Emma's wounds pulled her out of playtime with Emma, and Emma, somehow, knows it. Sparky is still here, and they spend most of their time in their respective chairs, lying down, recuperating emotionally. Emma in the chair in which I usually sit, with her on my lap:



parky across the room in the red chair.



mma's wounds are serious:



ine not so much, though wounds to the face are always scary. Also on my neck, wrist and hands, but all shallow, incurred during the attack by the two little dogs as I was trying to hold



The experience was harrowing, yes, and I imagine we will all be processing it for some time. But one thing feels blindingly clear: when the chips were down, my protective instinct was intact, and so was the protective aura that I've always noticed envelops me, and that has spared me from death, countless times.

We are not alone. Nor are we separate. Humans, dogs, cars, neighborhoods, forests, all of us swirling forms, dancing in harmony to the sometimes shockingly complex rhythms of mystery.

For me, this experience feels like one more rock in a foundation of trust in the protective aura of the cosmic field of Love that floods and fuels the continuous recreation of the universe.

Tell story here of how Mary tells this story and Sparky comes over, sits by her, and listens intently. Whenever I visit Seattle, Sparky and I are in communion.

Gratitude's gifts

July 12, 2011



Me and my shadow, winter 2010-2011

Despite my [post](#) of this morning, I guess I'm not quite done with the Emma aftermath. Here, I connect three threads:

1. An act that I performed on Sunday, after my sister and brother-in-law left, four days after Emma died.
2. A message via email this morning from my dear friend Perry, in Italy for the past year.
3. An email I received on the second morning after the tragedy, from another "stranger," ([see last post](#)), Kimberly Hughes, who lives in Tokyo.

These three threads, distilled, point to the single most powerful feeling that I have been undergoing during this entire postpartum week: gratitude.

The three threads:

On Sunday, I received a very strong message, that I must free the male rabbit, Alyce, NOW. Take him out of his wire cage. Let him roam on the ground for awhile. I was still exhausted, and not much in a mood to spend \$60 on a portable brass fence, but I did as commanded, and stumbled over to Petco. I set up the fence to give Alyce a 40-foot long run. And did he! Immediately, after I carefully cradled his trembling fearful little bunny body in my arms, and deposited him on the earth, for the first time in at least a year, he started hopping the length of his run like he'd died and gone to heaven. As Emma was released, so she wanted me to free her friend, too. I couldn't believe the rush of energy that single act gave me. Here he is, back in his cage. He says that was enough for awhile!



Next, the email from Perry: she told me of a dream she had received last week, that made her worry about me, feeling something was wrong. The dream ate at her, but she wasn't near a computer, and so didn't receive the message about Emma until today. She will tell me the dream when she arrives home, in August. Again, gratitude! That she and I are so connected. That what occurs in one part of our world reverberates out. That what resonates inside me, resonates as well inside Perry my friend, who, by the way, was by my side as [I washed Jeff's body after he died.](#)

Finally, the long message from the so-called “stranger,” Kimberly Hughes, in Tokyo. I received this email on the third morning, upon awakening. That second night post-trauma had been extremely difficult, with very little actual rest. In the early morning I had decided to get up and go water the GANG Garden. But when I opened the door I noticed, to my immense gratitude, that it had rained during the night. Aaaah. . . I could go back to bed and try to sleep, finally. . . . which I did! — not waking up for two whole hours. Again, such a blessing! Intense gratitude, that I would have been allowed to actually drop into unconsciousness during such a time of shock.

I snapped on my iphone, touched the screen for the morning mail, and discovered Kimberly’s thoughtful and unusually comprehensive appreciation of the expanding interdimensional space being invoked through this exopermaculture blog. Her gratitude felt so full and rich that it made my soul sing with again, a joy and love and gratitude so enormous that it was as if my heart would burst.

I have just gone back over Kimberly’s message, and clicked on all the links. They are wonderful. I especially resonated to <http://www.thedreamtribe.com> and Kimberly’s own blog, her post on her experience after Fukushima. Do take a look. So thank you thank you Kimberly, and all the others who have reached out to me, surrounding and enveloping me in loving, empathic kindness during this intensely bittersweet time of fresh grief and gratitude. Even now I feel Emma’s graceful, bounding presence stirring up a storm of blessings all around my head. She’s racing in circles, excited and panting and glad.

I am one of the silent and grateful readers of your blog, and I wanted to write first of all with my deepest condolences for your loss of Emma. I too grew to love her energy and playful spirit through your descriptions of her, and shed many tears in reading today’s post about the celebration of her short and yet powerful and healing time together with you on our Earth.

I also have an animal who is my teacher, friend and endless purveyor of positive and healing energy (a cat named Yoda...I did not name him, although the name is right on target :). The time that I spend with him is quite limited, though, as (being a cat) he is equally happy to spend hours outside on his own surveying his territory. I can't imagine the grief you must feel at losing your full-time companion...and am so glad that you continue to feel Emma's loving and healing presence surrounding you.

I first found your blog around the end of March or beginning of April through a random Internet search, and was immediately and deeply drawn to it (which has remained the case ever since then). As I live in Tokyo, Japan, the fears and uncertainties around the situation in Fukushima were very strong at that time (before numbness and forgetfulness took over the collective public mind), so finding your blog was truly an incredible experience for me.

I was, and am, so very grateful to you for the concept of the blog itself — which resonates with me very deeply — as well as all of the additional amazing resources you point your readers toward, such as Ingrid Naiman's research on radiation (which has been immensely helpful), as has Inelia Benz' work on ascension, and most of all, the attitude and spirit with which you approach it all.

I have tentatively tried sharing your work with others, but have found — as you yourself I believe also have experienced — that most others are simply not ready for most of the ideas. I must admit that I myself have a hard time with the idea of our world being ruled by lizards from another dimension (!), and, like you, I struggle back and forth with the idea of whether or not this and other tragedies were somehow unleashed deliberately.

In any case, I certainly believe that there are dark forces at work, but above all I truly appreciate the strength and integrity with which you show that we can and must rise with the light even as we keep one

foot in the real world with all of its heaviness and suffering. I also am grateful for the ideas and resources you have shared around the idea of as-of-yet unexplored energies and our ability to tap into other realities and dimensions.

My knowledge on all of this is presently close to nothing, but I know that there is something there because of my own personal experience — my partner and I both had a series of prophetic disaster-related dreams just prior to March 11th — and so I am extremely interested in exploring these ideas in the coming months and years. In fact, I have started to do so a bit at the Dream Tribe website, and wonder if you are familiar with their work?

<http://thedreamtribe.com/>

I also wonder whether you have encountered the work of Japanese author, peace activist and environmentalist Yumi Kikuchi? She used to work quite closely with Benjamin Fulford (not sure if she still does). While the content of her Japanese blog is quite varied and fascinating, she focused her English blog for a long time almost exclusively on the 9-11 Truth Movement, which is fine (again, I wouldn't at all be surprised if they are right), but again I believe this is just one piece within the larger picture. At any rate, her husband Gen Morita is an organic farmer who is very much interested in ET / free energy related issues, and between the two of them, they very much remind me of your exopermaculture work! They are friends of mine, and if you like I could put you in touch at some point. Yumi's site is here:

<http://www.yumikikuchi.blogspot.com/>

And although I don't think Gen has an English site, I just found this recent interview through a Google search (haven't even had a chance to watch it yet):

http://www.cocreatingourreality.com/xn/detail/1996603:Video:835169?xg_source=activity

Lastly, I wrote a personal account of my experience in and after the disaster on my website, where I also have a collection of writings I have been doing before and after then, most recently on the anti-nuclear movement in Japan. Had I known about your blog at the time I wrote this, I definitely would have included it! :)

<http://kimmiesunshine.wordpress.com/2011/03/23/welcoming-a-new-world/>

I am sorry to send you so much in your time of grief, and I certainly do not expect a reply anytime soon. I just wanted you to know how much of a source of comfort and inspiration your blog has been for me, and to let you know that I (as with many others, I am sure) are thinking of you and also sending loving thoughts to little Emma as she continues onward along her journey.

With gratitude,
Kimberly Hughes

Post-Emma: How to begin again with this blog?

July 13, 2011



The shock of being blindsided by the [sudden death of my soul companion Emma](#) occurred exactly one week ago, almost to the hour. I have blogged more than I expected, but always about that, the sudden mortal blow to her body, and how the shock impacted me. While there may be readers who feel that I got sidetracked, derailed from my exopermacultural purpose, to me, what I did was dip, in the tiniest of ways, into the deep well of collective grieving that lies just beneath the surface of everything we so frantically “do” (including the daily work of this blog, to “surf” the internet and somehow (how???) pluck from an endless roiling, turbulent river of instantly dissolving, multidimensional ephemera — that which might highlight and lend perspective).

That so many responded so emotionally to the death of a little white dog whom they had never met is, I feel, indicative of just how close our tears are to the surface. And they are tears, not just for one thing or another, but for the whole, for all of us, for the deep disturbance that we have unknowingly introduced into the ever-renewing living and dying cycle of abundance on this beautiful earth. I excerpt here from a [piece](#) that I find unusually perceptive:

“While the scale of the existential threat to human and wider ecosystem well-being is extremely well documented across the spectrum of the physical sciences, what is perhaps most astonishing is the degree to which human societies and the wider global community have failed – or simply proved unable – to respond. The problems, while vast, are potentially fixable. But as the clock ticks towards midnight, we’ve given up even the meaningful pretence of trying. Why?”

“Tempting though it is to lay the blame at the door of energy industry propaganda, the cynical and corporatised media and marketers or the malign influence of right wing economists on careerist politicians, the answer also appears to lie deep within human psychology. As a species, we have rarely faced a collective crisis of this magnitude, and our ancient (so-called reptilian) brains have proven ill-equipped to respond to a slow-moving disaster. We are hard-wired only to react to immediate threats via the ‘fight-or-flight’ endocrinal reflex. Evolution also makes us prone to heavily ‘discount’ future costs against even modest present gains. It is extremely difficult for most humans (or our media) to stay focused for long periods on threats that appear abstract, distant, or are complex and multi-dimensional.

“Awakening to the prospect of climate disruption compels us to abandon most of the comfortable beliefs that have sustained our sense of the world as a stable place”, argues public ethicist, Clive Hamilton. The foundation beliefs of modernity are on the line. “When we recognise that our dreams of the future are built on sand, the natural human response is to despair.”

In the current circumstances, Professor Hamilton argues that clinging to hopefulness is just another form of denial. “We must allow ourselves to enter a phase of desolation and hopelessness; in short, to grieve.” That grief is for the loss of the future. The destruction of what is known as our *ontological security* — the mental stability derived from our belief that there is order and continuity in our lives — is deeply traumatic. “At present, the early mourners feel lonely and isolated, sometimes keeping their thoughts to themselves for fear of alienating those around them

with their anxieties and pessimism.” It is, he suggests, like having just learned from the doctors that there is no hope for recovery of a sick child, while your relatives crowd around reassuring you the child will be just fine.

The three stages he suggests we as individuals must pass through are: i) Despair; ii) Accept; iii) Act. Sugar-coating the scale and sheer intractability of the climate and ecological crisis to anything other than radical measures (a route favoured by many environmentalists) has manifestly failed. The roots of denialism run too deep, the crisis is too pressing, the vested interests too powerful and the time remaining in which our actions can have effect too short.

A.K. : Here’s how I decided to begin again, here’s the action I took in the face of grief: I photographed and then wrote a [piece](#) for the Green Acres Neighborhood Garden blog about how the GANG garden is growing. How beautifully do plants, in reaching for the sun, condense light into endlessly recycling material forms that replenish our bodies, and, if we are attuned to subtle harmonies, our souls as well!

Here’s one of the photos from this cool, grey morning’s shoot and [blogpost](#).

It’s fun and the final part shows me at my most ignorant . . .



Contemplating Emma: Love's Abundance

July 23, 2011



It's now been two and a half weeks [since my beloved Emma left her body](#), and this 3-D world, behind. At this point, I feel her hovering above my left shoulder, a tiny tinkerbelle and bright, bright spirit!

It's been a wild ride. Tsunamis of feeling rise and recede, over and over, day by day, and yet more and more upon a distant shore. In part, I credit the relative ease of transition to the distance Reiki healings being generously gifted to me by Dawn, a reader of this site, from England. Thank you thank you!

I still avoid long daily walks, as every step would remind me of her. Instead, I bike. For the same reason, driving the car is difficult, since her little behind isn't planted on the other front seat, front paws on the armrest, nose out the window. I still notice that without her I sometimes feel much more alone, and even lonely, even a bit crazy, unbalanced. I don't think that's the grief. I think that's the state I used to be in most of the time, pre-Emma! Somehow, her little animal body was what I

needed to get and stay sane. To feel grounded, at ease in physical reality. She was my soul companion, and our continuous loving meditation my comfort food in a world gone apparently mad.

And yet, and yet. A few days after her dramatic, shocking departure, I was on my bike in the early morning, and came across a black man and his son by the Jordan River (really, a creek), on the IU campus behind the campus union building, near one of Emma's swimming holes. They were taking each others' photos. I stopped my bike, and spontaneously, casually, as if Emma was with me, asked them if they would like me to take their picture. They would. A wonderful, easy, five-minute conversation ensued.

As I rode away, all of a sudden I realized what I had just done: I had just applied what Emma had taught me to a real-life situation, and I did it *without* her as my "[Ambassador of Love](#)"! Her presence had made it easy to talk with whoever came along. No one was a stranger when we could all relate through a joyful little dog.

It wasn't as if I hadn't stopped at other times in my life, pre-Emma, to ask if two people, taking each other's pictures, might like me to take one of both of them. But always, the question had been stilted, and polite, as was the answer. And whether or not I took the picture, our connection felt awkward.

Somehow, Emma was now showing me that already, she had transferred all that was in her to give to the world. That flowing connection, that joie de vivre gracing her every move. Already! Only a few days after her departure, and despite my near-crippling grief, I felt abundant and generous. You can imagine my gratitude.

But then, of course, within a minute or two, the reality of her absence again crashed in. And of course, during those early days, a huge part of me wanted to just "replace" her with another dog, so that I could just continue on with that feeling of being plugged into love. The pain of

losing her so intense and hard to bear. I'd look at what was available locally at the pound, and on petfinder.com. I'd wonder about breeds. Another coton? A coton mix? Some other small breed or small breed mix? A lot of my waking time went into these kinds of questions.

In the past few days my sister Kathy has been urging me to get another dog. Says that it would be the most worthy tribute to Emma. Well, yes. But not yet. I need to see my way through this interregnum period, where I am honoring her memory and integrating her bright spirit into my being.

Even during those early days when I was thinking about replacing her right away, a whiff of something more profound would steal in. The recognition that, oh my god, there are so many dogs in the world that need homes. So many! Everywhere I look, dogs, dogs, all of them ambassadors of the love that runs through the universe. All of them such gracious gifts to us humans who so rarely appreciate what they bring to us, the endless river of love that runs on beneath our egos, that precious precious feeling of connection, body to body, soul to soul. That unnoticed mysterious unity that fuels life, no matter what form it takes. Little Emma *was* the universal love, configured into a certain little white squirming precious warm form; another dog will remind me of Emma in the endless love he or she will share; the self-same river of unconditional concern, housed in a new and and unfamiliar form. And not just dogs, but all animals, all of them, gifting the human race with their sharing of spontaneous, uninhibited life, undisguised by the contortions of "self-awareness."

It's the form we get attached to, forgetting that love's abundance is infinite — even bigger than the overwhelming number of dogs who need us to give them homes.

This afternoon, as I was writing this piece, a peculiar grace, unannounced. Baby woodchuck, on the sill of my living room picture window. Looking right at me. Astonished. I burst into tears.



With Emma's passing, my suffering is her blessing

July 25, 2011



I did it again this morning, went on petfinder. This time to look at maltese/poodle mixes. For about 20 minutes. "Wasting time." If I'm going to look online, why not just go and pick one out? There are lots of homeless little dogs at shelters in both Martinsville and Poland, Indiana. But no. Not yet. Going online to torture myself with "what if" is not the first step to action but a repeating note in the mysterious rhythms of grief.

Yesterday: "Get another dog. Just get another dog." My 95-year-old father, on the phone from Seattle, sounding so concerned he's almost desperate. Dad wants me to "replace" Emma. NOW.

As if we only have so much "down time" before we must get up, dust ourselves off, and keep going.

As if one blooming beauty can ever replace another.

As if each precious expression of the life force that fuels the universe is not unique, original, and deserving of full remembrance, re-membrance: the process of putting back together again all the dismembered parts, the bits and piece of memory, to honor the entire experience of loving connection.

As if I can just plug in, one after another, to different “objects” that will satisfy my own need to belong — be loved, seen, heard, smelt, felt.

As if it would be fair to whoever will be the next precious canine being that I invite into my life to be always reminded, and compared, to the incomparable Emma!

Given the sweet, well-meaning efforts of first, my sister, and now my father, to lessen or hasten, or bury my admitted suffering, I am reminded of how difficult it is for us in this madcap society to sink below the restless, grasping mind, and stay there, floating in the ocean of feeling, its waves rising and falling and rising and falling again. Simply, I must do this until done. I must complete this round of attachment, this cycle of communion with one exquisite little white dog, with all the grief and gratitude that is in me.

This is real. This is my reality. Amidst the swirl of international events so extreme as to stagger the imagination, I must attend to my own unique, original body’s expression of being as it struggles to absorb this latest shock to its survival.

Yes, at night when I feel the presence of her absence on the bed. Yes, on campus, when I ride by the places where I used to free her from her leash to chase a squirrel and her quivering anticipation and leaps of joy would, every single time, startle me to laugh out loud. Yes, when eating chicken and *not* cutting up little pieces of white meat for her. All these memories, each a jewel refracting light in all directions.

It is this process, this full immersion into oceanic surrender, that will not only allow me to go on, but as I pause to absorb the briefly lit candle of her forever young life into this seemingly endless presence of suffering, the universe will fold my grief into regeneration, seeding endless blessings into new life.

Me and My Shadow

July 31, 2011

Exactly 21 days after dear [Emma](#) slammed free of this dimension and left me in lingering shock, I woke up. Something had shifted within me. I was supposed to get a dog, a particular dog, that very day. I thought I might have a vague idea of what the dog might look like, small, of course, male, darker color than Emma, but that's it . . . until I walked into the living room and for a split second saw this beautiful little dog, curled up in my chair where Emma used to sit. The vision lasted only a split second. But it left me knowing just who this little soul was.

So I went online again, straight to Poland, Indiana, the Rescue Farm there, where I “knew” he would be. Saw the head of a dog who did indeed look like him. Must be him! Set up an appointment for the next day. Asked Doug, one of my new [Green Acres Neighborhood Ecovillage](#) mates — Doug moves in directly across the street tomorrow — to go out there with me. That way we could continue to work on the text for our ecovillage website on the way there, and he could meet all the dogs, since he also wants to get one once he's settled in.

So, starting at 3 p.m., on last Thursday's hot, sweltering afternoon, we drove west on state road 46 to Spencer and kept on going until we came to a church, went a bit further, then turned right, then left at the T, then right — by this time we're on a gravel road — then a final left, and aaah, yes, there's the red shed where it's supposed to be from the directions, and yes, almost exactly one hour from when we started, we had arrived at the [Rescue Farm](#) run by a young couple who are manifesting their dream of helping small dogs and cats find forever homes.

The young woman ushered us in to their little show room, where she had already brought in the dog I had picked out by his photo.

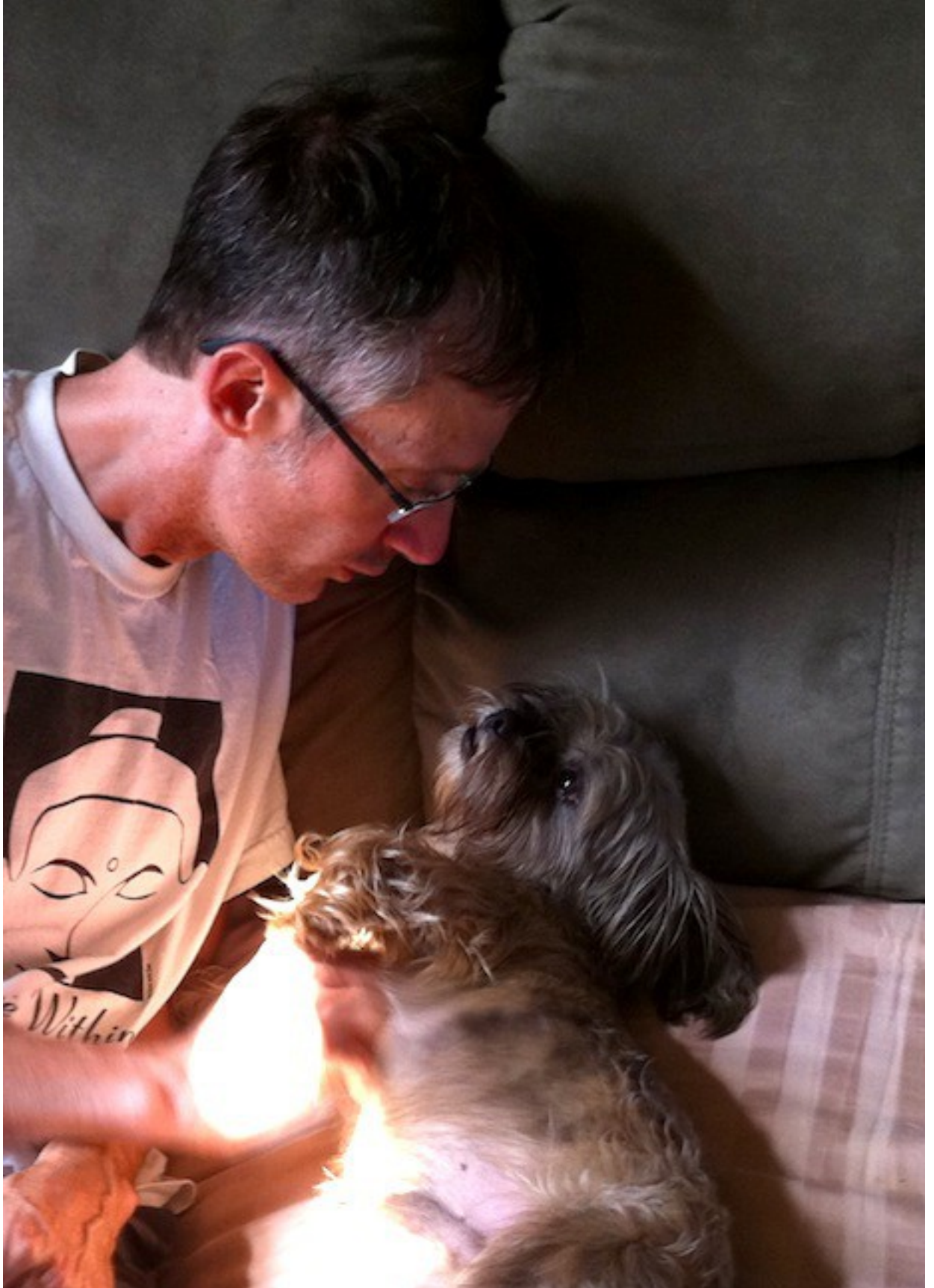
Oops! Not him! Not the dog in my vision curled up in the chair! HUGE surprise and letdown. Especially since the dog's name was "Emmett," and when I had seen him on the website, I was overwhelmed by the synchronicity with Emmett being a male version of Emma . . .

Okay, so maybe it's another dog? She took us out to the kennel, warning us beforehand of the huge clamor our entrance would create. Two tiers of crates on facing walls . . . And yes, huge clamor, each dog begging to be the one chosen for deliverance. Looking at the cages on the east wall, I couldn't take my eyes off a small white dog that reminded me so much of Emma it was painful. And that little dog was doing his? her? very best to get me to say yes, locking desperately into my eyes with no sound.

I wrenched myself away. No. Not a faux Emma-replacement. Not fair to Emma or to her successor. Where's the one I saw in my mind's eye?

I turned to the west wall; again, huge swelling clamorous voices. I was feeling overwhelmed, overcome with their pain, their need, their desperation. The young woman pointed to the top right corner cage, hidden in the shadows. That dog. I looked. Hard to see, but YES! That dog. I pointed. She brought him out, and I followed her back out of emotional hell into the light, silent, sultry summer day.

There was no question. This was the dog.



Doug, "dogfather," in Rescue Farm showroom, communing

Even before we returned to the show room, it was obvious to me that "Jo Jo" would be going home with us. (Ugh, I thought. Must rename.) Two years and one month old, ten pounds (two pounds smaller than Emma), soft, silver and bronze-colored hair with darker head and tail. A Silky Terrier (like a Yorkie, but bigger).

His story: "Jo Jo" was the beloved dog of a homeless woman who lived in her car. She had left him in the car with the windows cracked on a hot day for two hours and someone turned her in for breaking a state law against leaving children or pets in a car, even with the windows cracked, during hot weather. She tried for two weeks to get him back, but it would have cost her \$1500 (in court fees?).

Yes, this law is a good one; and, how awful it must have been for a homeless woman to lose her puppy. I imagined Jo Jo as her only real contact in the world . . . And now, I was the one who got the benefit.



And boy, did I! After only two days, I see that all the “shadow” aspects of Emma that I did not like (her need to bark excessively: at someone coming to the door, at dogs going by our house, at big dogs we meet on

our walks, at anything on small wheels — vacuum cleaners, suitcases, skateboards) is *not* part of this little dog's makeup. YES!

Furthermore, he's completely house-trained, and after the first night in a crate, insisted on sleeping on the bed with me. (How do I know? On the second night, when I was ready to go to bed and still not certain about his willingness to not pee on my bed, he kept dragging the blanket out of the crate when I'd try to put it in there.) We slept together fine. No big deal.

On the first morning, I already had his new name. Officially and formally, he would be called "Curious George" (already he shows a penchant for exploring small spaces in the house that Emma completely ignored). But since the name "George" doesn't really fit his little self, he will be known by part of his last name. So full name — drum roll — CURIOUS GEORGE, THE SILVER SHADOW.

And Shadow he is. Constantly near me, ever underfoot, and since he's darker than Emma's whiteness, easy to trip over at night when I get up for a drink of water.



After two days, I still have trouble saying “he” rather than “she.” I do constantly compare them, and am surprised to realize that I “prefer” (rationally) Shadow to Emma, in that he doesn’t bark so much. (Plus, his hair, being silky rather than cottony and sparser than hers, doesn’t get all matted!)

And then, of course, guilty, guilty, guilty, of bespoiling her memory!

I watch myself go through these feeling states, and am reminded of how, when Jeff died, I realized soon afterwards that life without him felt much more spacious, despite that I missed him so.

I think, maybe I shouldn’t have gotten a dog so fast? Only 21 days? My god, was I just following my sister and Dad’s advice after all? (see [this post](#)). Then I feel foolish, and stupid, and weak, unable to take my own advice, which I think is much more sound. Ha!

But the directive was so swift, and clear, and surprising! And the vision of Shadow on my chair so startling and real. Then I think Emma dissolved into the plenum so that she could come back as Shadow, minus the foibles of her Emma personality that drove me crazy.

But no, that can’t be, unless Emma “[walked in](#)” to Shadow’s body. For Shadow was there waiting for me, even when Emma was alive. He had been at the Rescue Farm for the same three weeks that I had been without Emma. Wow! Did he arrive there the very same day she left me? Where is the homeless woman now? How she must miss her little dog.

These questions, these thoughts, these contradictory feelings. I notice myself having them all, one after another. I notice how my mind can always find something to think about, even when my body has now, once again, been plugged into the Love of the universe as it flows through our blessed, precious dogs.

