

Topic: Feelings About Animal Pets

Parting with Pets Tears at my Heart Strings
by Liz Gibbons

Starting when I was about five our family always had one or more pets. We had some remarkable cats, but we did not have good luck with dogs. One was killed by a department store delivery truck and another got distemper and had to be put down. It was heartbreaking when our pets passed on.

With our sons we had a cat which we all loved. In 1972 we had been living in Rochester, New York, for nine years. We did not like the long winters. My husband and I decided we could live almost any place in the U. S. Perusing a map we considered various possibilities. We finally chose Colorado Springs. For the next year we saved as much money as we could to be able to move without a job awaiting us. The following summer on a quick weekend trip we found a townhouse to rent. But we felt uneasy moving our cat to the townhouse. He was used to being outside some, and the townhouse was located on a somewhat busy street. We feared for his safety there. So with a heavy heart we found him a new home with my husband's secretary who lived on a few acres on the edge of Rochester. Parting with him was a heart breaker for my sons and for me.

Ten years later with our sons grown my husband and I thought we would semi-retire. For reasons I cannot now fathom we chose Fayetteville, Arkansas. We found a beautiful passive solar home for sale on 40 acres on a gently sloping hillside on the edge of the city. I planned to grow a large garden, plant fruit and nut trees and become as self sufficient as possible on that land. It was beautiful there with a big pond below the house where large flocks of birds often stopped in their flights. In the late afternoon in the winter many deer grazed in the open meadow below our house. To me it was a dream come true. One day I heard a cat meowing. I went outside and saw a young, thin cat. He was very leery of me. I had a can of tuna fish in the kitchen cupboard and put some in a small dish outside along with a saucer of milk. It did not take long until that cat was comfortable with us and decided to stay. I fixed a place in the garage for him to sleep. But when winter came, I let him stay inside our house. Soon he was sleeping at the foot of our bed. My husband's business did not go well, so two years later we moved on to Atlanta. I had trouble parting with that cat. I found a shelter that would not euthanize him if he was not adopted in a set period of time. When I dropped the cat off and saw him alone in a large cage the tears flowed. I was notified in a few days that a young boy and his family had adopted him.

I loved the pets I had in my life. They brought much joy. When they died or we had to separate it was like losing a member of my family.