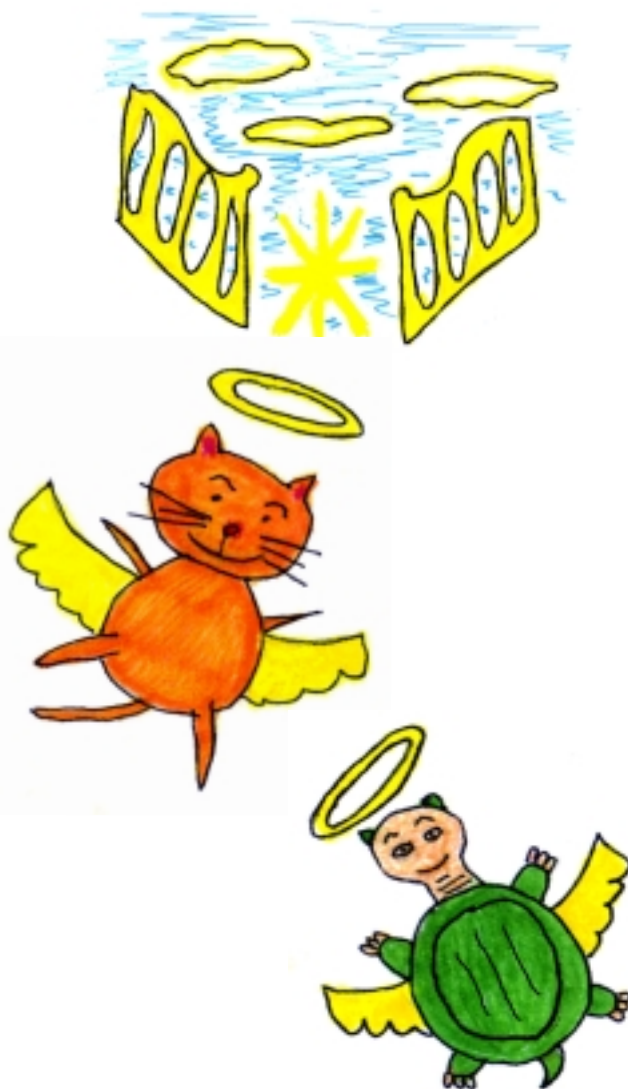


A Prayer for the Loss of a Pet

*Dear God, thank You for
sending us [name] and for allowing
her/him to be with us for a time.
She/he has been such a blessing to us,
and our lives have been richer because
You gave us the gift of one of Your
creatures.*

*We are sad now, because our
time with [name] has come to an end.
It is a real loss to us, and our world
does not seem as cheery and bright as it
was. Be with us in our time of grief,
dear God, and accept our mourning as
a form of praise for this love that has
enriched our lives. Amen.*



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Will
Mr. Pooper
go to
Heaven?



The loss of a pet is often a time of intense grief for children and adults alike. Pets become part of our identity. They offer companionship, devotion, amusement, and purpose without asking whether we are worth their time. In that sense they can be a means for us to understand and experience the grace of God that loves us even at our worst. In a way that only pet owners can understand, our pets become part of our souls, leading us to ask spiritual questions and to seek spiritual comfort at their passing.

When a beloved pet dies, people often ask the question, “Will my pet go to heaven?” Many people think this is a silly question, but it is not. The question is serious and important. It may sound like a simple question about animals, but it is really a fundamental question about the very nature of God and Creation: “Does God care enough about me to love what I love?” “Is there anything sacred in Creation apart from human beings?” Those are not silly questions. “Will my pet go to heaven?” is

a serious question that deserves a serious answer.

The Bible does not tell us whether or not our pets will enter heaven. But Scripture does have words of comfort for those who love the animals. The Bible tells us that animals are important to God. God created every living creature in the sea and on the land and called them “good” (Gen. 1:20-24). When sin got out of control and God decided to destroy the earth with a flood, God chose to save the animals as well as the people (Gen. 6:19-22). We are told that God makes covenants with the creatures (Gen 9:12-16; Hosea 2:18), and God gave instruction for the care of animals in the laws of Moses (Ex. 23:11-12). God even allowed the law to be broken to save an animal in trouble (Matt. 12:11; Luke 14:5).

God entrusted the care of the beasts to human beings (Gen. 1:26; Psalm 8:6-7), but God still owns them and cares for them (Psalm 50:10-11; Psalm 36:6; Psalm 104:10-22; Luke 12:6,24). The animals, for their part, participate with human beings in praising God (Psalm 148:7-12; Rev. 5:13) and are included in

descriptions of the new heaven and the new earth (Is. 11:6-9; Is. 65:25). The Bible shows its respect for animals by referring to Jesus as the “Lion of Judah” (Rev. 5:5) or “Lamb of God” (John 1:29). Romans 8:19-23 implies that all of Creation, human and non-human, awaits the redemption of the body and will be delivered from corruption.

God’s ways are not our ways (Is. 55:8-9), and what happens when a pet dies is something we can’t know for sure. But the Bible tells us that love never ends (1 Cor. 13:8), and that love is the very nature of God (1 John 4:8). That convinces me that Mr. Pooper and all the pets we have ever loved live on and will be waiting for us in heaven.

