

# THE JOURNEY

only her wonderful companion. Or maybe she saw those things and dismissed them as mere human foibles, not worth considering, and so chose to love me anyway. If you pay attention and learn well, when the journey is done, you will be not just a better person, but the person your pet always knew you to be - the one they were proud to call beloved friend. I must caution you that this journey is not without pain. Like all paths of true love, the pain is part of loving. For as surely as the sun sets, one day your dear animal companion will follow a trail you cannot yet go down. And you will have to find the strength and love to let them go. A pet's time on earth is far too short - especially for those that love them. We borrow them, really, just for awhile, and during these brief years they are generous enough to give us all their love, every inch of their spirit and heart, until one day there is nothing left.

The cat that only yesterday was a kitten is all too soon old and frail and sleeping in the sun. The young pup of boundless energy wakes up stiff and lame, the muzzle now gray. Deep down we somehow always knew that this journey would end. We knew that if we gave our hearts they would be broken. But give them we must for it is all they ask in return. When the time comes, and the road curves ahead to a place we cannot see, we give one final gift and let them run on ahead - young and whole once more.