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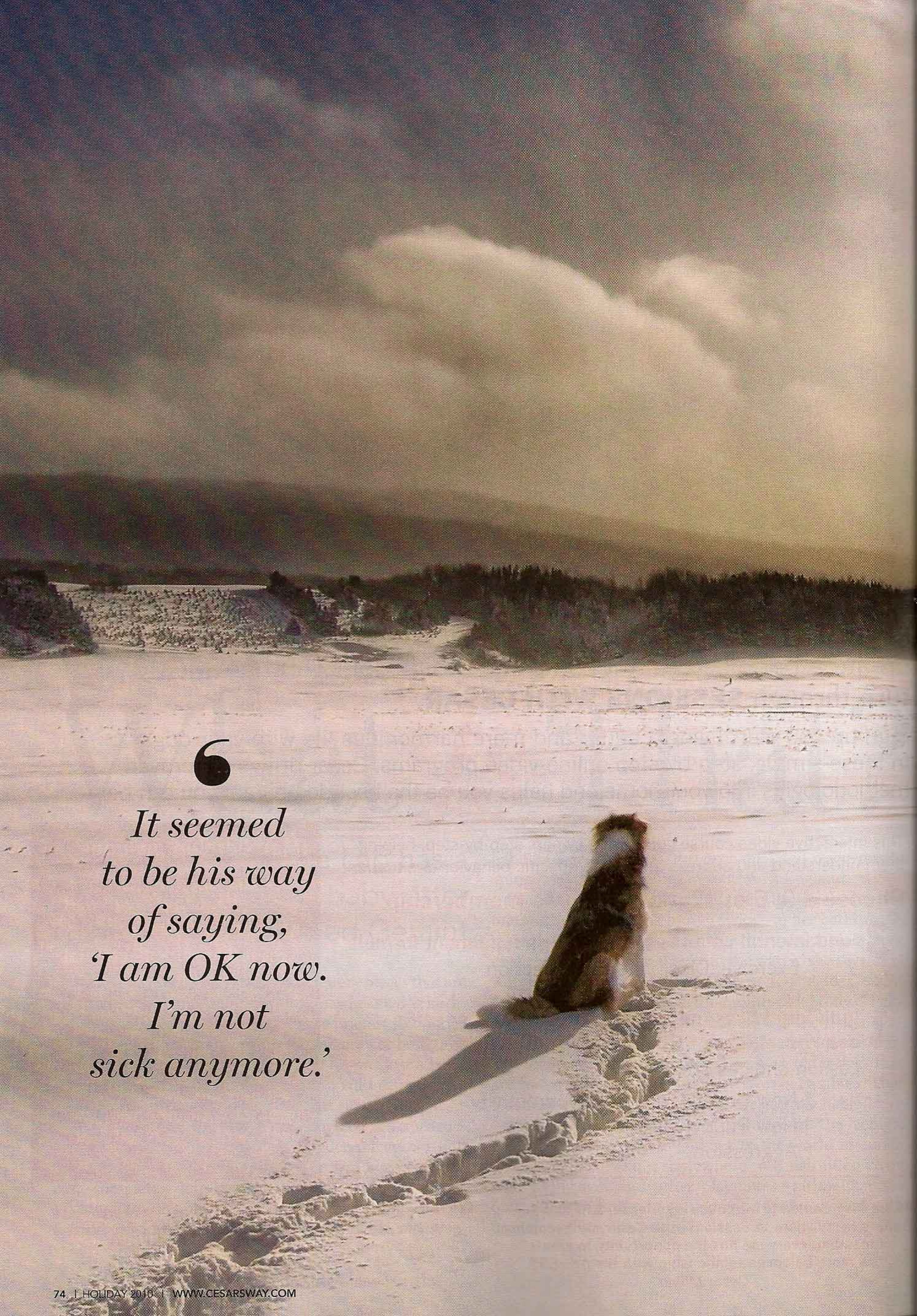
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of saying,
'I am OK now.
I'm not
sick anymore.'*



Can a Dog's Spirit Linger?

If the ghostly goings-on around one Pennsylvania shelter are any indication, the answer is a resounding "Yes!"

BY RICK MARKHAM

Three days after their beloved German Shepherd, Rion, passed away, Evelyn and Dave Lewis, of Shickshinny, Pennsylvania, were sitting in their living room, watching TV, when they both heard the distinctive jingling of Rion's collar. The sound could be heard for more than a minute, and there was no mistaking it for anything else.

"We got up to let Rion out," says Evelyn. "It was just a reflex on our part, something we did whenever he called us. We'd both made a couple steps toward the door before we realized, Oh, he isn't here anymore."

Rather than finding the experience creepy, though, Evelyn says, she recalls it being extremely comforting.

Evelyn and Dave had rescued Rion from a high-kill shelter when he was just four weeks old. And the trio spent the next 11 years sharing adventures together. "He was my travel companion and went everywhere with me," says Evelyn. "He was a really sociable dog who loved to play with all the kids in the neighborhood." He also wore a collar with a lot of tags on it, which he quickly got into the habit of

jingling whenever he wanted attention. The couple was heartbroken when, after a decade of companionship, Rion was stricken with Cushing's disease.

"The jingle," says Evelyn, "seemed to be his way of saying, 'I am OK now. I'm not sick anymore. We never heard it again. I remember distinctly that it was three days after he passed, so now I always say it takes three days for dogs to get to heaven.'"

According to world-renowned animal communicator and educator Colleen Nicholson, the Lewises' experience is not unique: "What I've found is that animals will tell their people not to worry. Animals are not afraid to cross over. For them it's one more step in a long, beautiful journey."

Nicholson—who investigates paranormal animal activity for everyone from private individuals to the country's biggest zoos, and is the author of *Crossing the Rainbow Bridge: Animal Journeys to Heaven*—explains that departed pets are more often able to "come through with a communication" once their humans are no longer actively grieving. It's a theory that jibes well with Evelyn and Dave's experience, as they heard Rion during a TV-watching moment—when their attention was clearly diverted.



at one point, the lower-shelf heat meters went off (indicating activity close to the ground), and that on the audio recording, “you can hear the scratching of animal feet at that same moment.”

A few weeks later, Daelynn was consulted; she found the Rolling Green pet cemetery adjacent to the shelter to be a hotbed of paranormal activity. “When they took me there,” she says, “I saw what they were looking for immediately.”

Daelynn reports that the cemetery’s guardian spirit looks like a stately older man—that can also appear as a very large dog, “like a Great Dane, but larger across the chest.” The apparition, she says, was sitting on a park bench near the center of the cemetery that night.

Cary has also seen the foggy outlines of a man and a dog in the same area. She first saw the “distinguished-looking gentleman” about two months after she began working at the shelter, in March of 2009. “He appeared in the northeast part of the cemetery,” she says, adding that she didn’t see the dog until the summer. “Both figures appear very fuzzy around the edges, and almost see-through. It’s always either a man or a dog; the two are never seen together.”

Meeting the watchful spirit in the pet cemetery left psychic Daelynn with a joyful feeling. “I love the fact that he can take the form of a large dog, a guardian. As a dog owner all my life, it gave me a warm feeling to know that he was there watching over things.”

We all love a good mystery, and what happens to us after we die is the greatest mystery of all. But animal ghost stories, it seems, are particularly compelling—because they suggest the uplifting possibility that we will one day be reunited with our departed pets.

A person traveling through northeastern Pennsylvania would do well to visit the Luzerne County SPCA, which lies on Fox Hill Road, near Wilkes-Barre. He may not see an actual ghost, but he’s certain to encounter a plethora of high-spirited animals, all desperately in need of loving homes. And if he chooses to adopt one, it’s guaranteed he’ll be haunted with a lifetime of happiness. ●

UNSOLVED MYSTERIES

When it comes to paranormal pet activity, dog stories outnumber cat tales by a significant margin. Daelynn Farrell, a psychic affiliated with Pennsylvania Hauntings and Supernatural Encounters, has a theory as to why that is. “Dogs,” she says, “are more obedient and likely to go where they’re told to go. A cat’s curiosity takes it wherever it pleases. This is true in the afterlife as well.”

Daelynn was recently consulted regarding odd goings-on at the Luzerne County SPCA, near her home in northeastern Pennsylvania. Cary Moran, education director for the shelter, reports that the earliest event took place about 13 years ago, when a manager, working after hours, heard a young girl call out, “Mommy, where are you?” There were no children—or anyone at all—around.

Employees have since reported seeing a boy wearing vintage clothing in the glass of an interior window. And Cary recalls one night when the dogs suddenly started barking in an arc, up and down the rows of indoor kennels, exactly as they do when someone walks the aisles. Yet no living soul was present.

During an investigation of the shelter by Animal Planet for an upcoming episode of *The Haunted*, heat sensors were set up in a long hallway. Cary reports that



From top: Shelter volunteer Cary Moran; inside the Luzerne County SPCA; a Rolling Green pet cemetery memorial