



# The Last Walk: Reflections on Our Pets at the End of Their Lives

*Jessica Pierce*

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From the moment when we first open our homes—and our hearts—to a new pet, we know that one day we will have to watch this beloved animal age and die. The pain of that eventual separation is the cruel corollary to the love we share with them, and most of us deal with it by simply ignoring its inevitability.

With *The Last Walk*, Jessica Pierce makes a forceful case that our pets, and the love we bear them, deserve better. Drawing on the moving story of the last year of the life of her own treasured dog, Ody, she presents an in-depth exploration of the practical, medical, and moral issues that trouble pet owners confronted with the decline and death of their companion animals. Pierce combines heart-wrenching personal stories, interviews, and scientific research to consider a wide range of questions about animal aging, end-of-life care, and death. She tackles such vexing questions as whether animals are aware of death, whether they're feeling pain, and if and when euthanasia is appropriate. Given what we know and can learn, how should we best honor the lives of our pets, both while they live and after they have left us?

The product of a lifetime of loving pets, studying philosophy, and collaborating with scientists at the forefront of the study of animal behavior and cognition, *The Last Walk* asks—and answers—the toughest questions pet owners face. The result is informative, moving, and consoling in equal parts; no pet lover should miss it.

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