

# Aiko

**June 14, 1997 – March 25, 2012**



Aiko and Kateyanne resting after climbing to the top of Mt. Constitution, Orcas Island, 2008

## Beloved

## Aiko's Funeral Service

**Call the Directions:** Elizabeth

**Psalm to my Beloved:** Elizabeth on behalf of Kateyanne

I have opened unto you, the fate of my being  
And like a tide, you have flowed into me.

All the channels of my spirit and the recesses of my soul  
Are grown sweet with your presence

You have brought me the calm of great tranquil waters  
And the quiet of summer seas

Your hands are filled with peace as the Moon tide  
Is filled with light

About your head is bound the eternal quiet of the stars  
And in your heart dwells the gentleness of dusk

I am clear and still

For I have opened unto you the wide gates of my being  
And like a tide, you have flowed into me.

**Opening Remarks:** Gretchen on behalf of Kateyanne

We have come here today, Kateyanne, Elizabeth and Gretchen, to say goodbye to our friend Aiko, a Dog.

Three Women gather today, to tend to this beautiful Dog and send her on her way. We are Women with hearts of courage and love.

Elizabeth, who has known Aiko longer, has seen her prance and smile, play and bend. And by Elizabeth's side, we find a cozy spot for her beloved Noodles, who she misses and loves.

Gretchen has known Aiko as she has begun heading off - old, frail, and deaf - and has helped care for her. And near to Gretchen is her beloved Zelda, who she misses and loves.

And Kateyanne, who has given Aiko the home, health, love and care that enabled this Dog to find an important place in the world, to live a very long life, and to be loved. We will miss Aiko very much.

We call to us those most dear to Aiko who **cannot** be here today - her human children, Morgan, who she has known since she was 15 and Dorian, her little girl, who she slept with and cared for since she was ten years old. We also bring into our circle Gabriel, Lucia, and most especially, Nina, Aiko's best friend, who she raised from a puppy and who will soon follow her, where they will romp and play easily together again. We think of every person who has passed through their home, whom Aiko greeted and

loved in her sweet and pure way. There are hundreds more here in spirit, because Aiko had many friends.

Aiko has just headed off to the Other Side. Kateyanne remains behind. They both watch through the Veil for a glimpse of each other. They are learning a new way to be together now.

As we prepare the body of Aiko, who we have each loved, we ask her forgiveness for any error we may make. We come to her with love and reverence, and as Human Beings in this realm, we are prone to error. Aiko, our Friend, a Dog, is prone to forgiveness. So in this Work, all is well.

**Readings:** If they want, Gretchen and Elizabeth

<Music: Praises to the World, Jennifer Berezan>

While the music plays, the women prepare Aiko's body for burial. This is called Encoffining.

**Encoffining:** Prepare Aiko for her return to the Mother: all tend to her, decorate her. Ask for forgiveness if you want to. Whisper or tell her anything you would like for her to take to the Other side and bury there on your behalf.

**Cover the body:** close the shroud, except for her face. Note that the shroud was a knitted blanket made by Kateyanne in the last year of Aiko's life.

**Poem:** Kateyanne

#### A Lament

I who am left, how shall I look again  
Happily on the sun or feel the rain  
Without remembering how she who went  
Ungrudgingly and spent  
Her life for me loved, too, the sun and rain?

A bird among the rain-wet lilac sings—  
But I, how shall I turn to little things  
And listen to the birds and winds and streams  
Made holy by her dreams,  
Nor feel the heart-break in the heart of things?

W.W.Gibson

**Eulogy:** Kateyanne

**Aiko**  
**Beloved**  
**June 14, 1997 – March 25, 2012**

Aiko was an Orcas Island Dog, born in June to a sweet, intelligent collie who looked like Lassie. Mama had a broken foot when I met her, hobbling with nine wriggling puppies underfoot, and her calm and kind nature, even while in pain, let me know what kind of gentle lady Aiko – then called Daisy – would become. Morgan, 15, Dorian, 10, and I (40!) sat on a sunny hillside several days a week for weeks, little collie/border collie pups rolling around us. This one? That one? I think it was Morgan who made the final decision, and we brought our little black and white pup home.

We got off to a rocky start. I was following old school teachings – locking her in the bathroom at night, where she howled and cried. Finally, I learned from the Monks of New Skeet that if I wanted Aiko to be my best friend, I had to be hers. Which meant I had to understand what a Dog wants and needs, and to treat her - not as a people friend - but as a Dog friend. She taught me Dog and I learned her language. She has been my greatest teacher in this life, thus far.

I told her from the start that she was, like Mary Poppins who she resembles, practically perfect in every way, except for her horrible shedding, which was enough to sorely tempt me to have her done in long ago. Now, I know I will cry over each dark hair I find – in my fridge, in my food, in my clothes, in my car. You never know, though. I might dance with happiness.

Aiko is Japanese for Beloved, for Darling Girl. Every time I spoke her name, I spoke those words in my heart. Please forgive me, Aiko, for the times I yelled at you or got frustrated. You never deserved it. You were always attentive, loyal, watchful, protective, silly, and sweet. Always kind and fun. You never left my side. You knew me better than I knew myself. You knew me. You saw me. You loved me and you accepted me. There can be no better love than that. Please allow me to say how sorry I am for any pain I ever caused you. I know you forgave me in the moment, but I have to ask anyway. Please forgive me my errors.

Aiko loved long walks on Stinky Beach, the beach down the street from our Orcas Island house, strewn with dead crabs and rotting kelp. Canada on the near horizon, Cascade mountains to the east. We skipped stones and played in the water. Aiko loved Marymoor Dog Park. She knew when I turned into the park - my quiet dog would start moaning and screeching ‘Mamamamama!!!! Mamamammaaaa!!!’ It would hurt my ears and I told her, ‘Aiko! Quiet!’ and she would try so hard to listen, whispering ‘*mamamamamaaaaaa!*’ Her best friend Nina, a Golden Retriever, taught her how to swim at Marymoor. She would swim like a fish, but Aiko stuck to shore for a year, whining after her. Then one day, when she was about five years old, she swam off into the middle of the Sammamish River to join Nina. She lived with me for the best summer of our lives, in this tipi, with two other Dog friends. On Whidbey, Double Bluff was the place she loved, slowly ambling now at age 13 along the long walk to Eagle Rock, needing a bit of help getting over big logs. Still wading out to the water a bit, smiling. Always smiling.

We nicknamed her Mrs. Kravitz, after Gladys Kravitz, the nosey neighbor on Bewitched. I would often find her standing at the window, her large rump peeking out of the edge of the curtains that looked like an old housecoat, peering at what the neighbors were doing.

But she was far too ladylike to be like Mrs. Kravitz, really. She loved to dress in scarves and lie beneath long curtains, feeling them fall and drape over her body. She loved to put on lotion and lipstick, which

she was unashamedly addicted to. She knew she was a beauty, a Goddess. She feels so proud right now, at how adorned she has been made by us.

Aiko, Darling Girl, was a hard worker. She kept the house free of bugs. The yard was harder, but she kept at it. She raised up many kittens and puppies, even nursing them tenderly (without any milk). And she was a Greeter, inviting each person who came down the driveway to feel treasured. She would stay by their sides for most of their visit, glancing at me to see what was required, how she could help me first, then them. I have seen her heal people with that gentle loving leaning in against their legs, their hands stroking her side while they told us what was troubling them. Aiko and I held them in love and light, together. And we will keep doing that.

You know that Aiko and I have decided to go on in our work. I tried to talk her into leaving for a few years now. But she is Aiko, and a Collie. They bind themselves to your Soul. She will not leave. So I have asked of both of us, a great and difficult task.

Here, together, we begin a transformation into a Team, one on each side, connected deeply to one another. Thank you Aiko, for continuing our journey together.

Aiko the light in our hearts that connects us will be your leash for now, and will be as home to you in your transition. And soon, when you hear the earthly drum of your earthly form, you will know to come to me more easily. Until then I will come to you. I will walk and run by your side, while you show me all the new places you have found in your Spirit world. And we will play together there while we learn, while you continue to teach me your language.

Godspeed, Dog.

**Personal remembrance:** Gretchen reads, on behalf of Morgan, who was 16 when we got Aiko:

“If I could save time in a bottle, the first thing that I’d like to do is to save everyday till eternity passes away just to spend them with you.” – Jim Croce.

The life of a special dog is able to hold that time sacred and marks it as an era in our lives. For me, Aiko symbolized a coming of age, and has been around through so many important events in my young adult life. I remember planning to get Aiko, I believe I was about 16 or 17. We hadn’t had a dog in 10 years or so, and I was so excited to have a new puppy. The day that we went to pick her out of the litter from my High School History teacher’s house is one day that I will always remember. I knew from the moment that I saw Aiko that she was the one for us. She was so sweet, calm and affectionate. I remember my Mom picking out Aiko’s name, meaning ‘love’ in Japanese and thinking how perfect of a name it was for her.

I have a few specific memories of Aiko that I’d like to share. The first memory is a day shortly after she came home with us, my friend Bree and I took her outside for a photo shoot. I remember we thought we were so funny, making silly poses with the puppy all over the yard and at “Stinky Beach” (which came to be one of Aiko’s favorite places to be). I still hold those photos dear and smile whenever I look at them.

Aiko then saw me through meeting Eldi - we would take her for walks when he came to visit and she would sit on his lap. She knows a good man when she sees him. She saw me through graduating High School, getting married and moving onto our own. Soon after, because we loved Aiko so much, we decided to get our own puppy. Probably my most endearing memory of Aiko is the way that she nurtured and cared for Nina as she grew from a young pup to a wonderful dog herself. Aiko gently guided her and taught her how to behave, snuggled with her and treated her as a Mother and a mentor. Another very special photo that I will always hold near to my heart is one of Nina lying in the space between Aiko's fore and hind legs, nestled up and cozy. Now Nina dwarfs Aiko in size, but Aiko will always be her best friend and mentor. Aiko and Nina spent many of their days together over the past 12 years, romping in the dog park, playing at the beach and being silly in the house together. They have a dog friendship that will be missed greatly.

Aiko has been there as a spirit guide to help us through many firsts in our lives--buying a home, the births of our children who she's taken great care with, deaths, celebrations and ceremonies. She will always hold an extremely special place in our hearts and be dearly missed. Her passing is marking another transition in my life, into an established and secure adulthood. I know that the time is coming soon for our own dog to pass as well, and while I am very saddened that Aiko will be leaving us earthside, it gives me great comfort to know that she will be on the other side, waiting for Nina, ready to guide her and mentor her and show her the ways and the joys of whatever is to come in the after life, just as she did for her as a Puppy. We love you so much Aiko. Thank you for being there for us and seeing us through the joys and sorrows of the past 15 years. Your presence in our lives was one of guiding and grounding and I will always remember you as a very special spirit.

**Personal remembrance:** Elizabeth, on behalf of Dorian. Dorian was 11 when we got Aiko:

Aiko has always had a spirit of gentleness and playfulness and humour. I remember her first few weeks with us as a little puppy--just before the tragedy of Princess Diana's death. Mom and I slept with her downstairs on the fold out sofa bed, as she was too little to make it up the stairs. I remember my mom building a fenced in area around the back door for Aiko to stay in during the day. I remember the first time she tried to walk down the slippery wooden stairs in our house, and seemed about to fall head first down them--or so she thought. I remember how she would bark and get so angry when I would crawl into my mom's bed. She would take the corner of the bedspread in her teeth, wrench it off the bed and swing it back and forth, growling all the time. It was her way of telling me to "get out!" I remember when she was a little older, dragging me across the floor of the living room, a rope toy in her mouth and in my hands. Then she would tackle me and pin me down with her chest and lick my face until I couldn't breathe for laughing. I remember how whenever I was home alone and nervous, she would stick by my side, and come when I called her. She would so dutifully inform me of any rogue squirrel or deer in the vicinity. I always felt safe with her around. I remember how she would always be in the car waiting for me when my mom picked me up from the airport on my trips home from college, and would lick my face and be so excited to see me. Aiko has been the best of friends for 15 years, and a member of our family. I cannot imagine another dog like her, and I will miss her dearly. Best of journeys, Aiko. We are all filled with gratitude at what you have brought us throughout your life.

**Personal remembrance:** Elizabeth, memories of Aiko and of Noodles

**Personal remembrance:** Gretchen, memories of Aiko and of Zelda

<Music: Praises for the World, louder>

**Remove** Cover the shroud and remove Aiko's body from the house and place her in the grave. Fill in the grave and place the markers: pole w/ feather, bowl of water, rock, and candle.

**Committal to the Earth:** Kateyanne

**Prayer to the Alchemist**

I pray you  
Take this weeping heart  
And all the broken things  
That lie with Your hand  
Distil the agony  
Until  
From all its hurt  
A single drop of sweetness  
May remain  
Changing the substance  
Of this death in earth  
To make all new -  
A rising sap  
To bring the transformation  
Of the spring

Margaret Torrie

**Invocation in the spirit of gratitude, healing and love:** Elizabeth

**Offering blessings and inspiration for the living:** Gretchen – hold hands, breathe deeply three times, listen to the sounds of Spring around us.

**Close the Circle:** Kateyanne

**Kateyanne:** Let us proceed in peace and yield to The Mother that which we must yield.

