

Visitation

I loved my cats and when they passed I realised their uniqueness was unsurpassed. At seventeen went Harley, a great friendly lump. Another three years went Misty, a lovable grump.

I thought I'd never see them again, that it couldn't be possible, but in the small still hours one summer's night-morning, feeling wakeful, I was drawn outside to my garden, quiet and brilliantly moonlit. There was a soft rustling sound and through a hole in a fence and out of the shrubbery came Harley. I hadn't seen him for six years and was overwhelmed with the emotion of a reunion with something that had been thought lost. He remembered me and headed straight toward me, a black and white patchwork torpedo. Another rustling and out of the gap he'd left in the bushes came his smaller and fluffier twin sister Misty. I was deeply touched that they'd stayed together and that he'd looked after her. They appeared to be in good health, their oft-troublesome long-haired coats well-groomed. They were clearly in good hands and being cared for. Whilst they greeted me, and as I enjoyed their attentions, I couldn't help but feel a little guilty that their favourite spots around the house were now occupied by a young pretender, Charlie the tabby, who whilst playful company didn't possess Misty's spiky complexity of personality or Harley's lovable lumpiness.

The encounter was all too short. I felt myself being tugged upward through layers of sleep toward consciousness, struggling to stay with my loved ones, but they were fading away into a hazy distance and I was losing them yet again.

I felt comfort in the knowledge that they were still together and happy somewhere in their afterlife, Harley leading and Misty following, probably still occasionally squabbling over a mouse or a morsel. Their afterlife. One of the many I don't believe in.



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