



WHEN SHINER DIED

A Children's Book About Pet Loss

By Rebecca S. Hauder, with Maggie Roxanne & Luke Zamzow Hauder

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Includes Pages for Recording Pet Memories, and
Suggestions for Helping Children Heal

By Rebecca S. Hauder, RN, M.Ed.
with Maggie Roxanne and Luke Zamzow Hauder

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Without Shiner, the beautiful yellow lab that visited our backyard and living room on many occasions, this story would not be as genuine and personally tender. Thank you, Shiner!

*“What we have enjoyed we can never lose.
All that we have loved deeply becomes part of us.”*

~Helen Keller



Shiner, Roscoe, and Spiderman
with Maggie, Luke, and their parents

Introduction

Pets come in many colors, sizes, and breeds, and each with a unique personality. They quickly endear themselves to their adoptive families, becoming beloved and cherished members. It is no surprise, then, that the death of a pet from illness, accident, or old age can be extremely difficult for both children and adults. It can even hurt as much as losing a human friend or family member.

This story about Shiner's life and death, as told by my grandchildren, Maggie (6) and Luke (4), is aimed at children, but it is sure to touch the hearts of pet-loving adults as well. I've included space for children to share their own pet memories, and a list of practical suggestions to help adults support children. I hope this book will be a source of comfort and encouragement to all who have lost a special pet.

~Rebecca S. Hauder



Shiner (short for “Sunshine”) was our yellow lab. My mom got her before we were born, so we knew Shiner even when we were babies. She was a very gentle dog and never scared us, even though she was big. She was like a sister to Roscoe, our black lab, and like a mom to Hannah and Spiderman, our kittens, who always snuggled up to her. They were so sweet!



SUNSHINE

After we filled the hole with dirt, we put a humongous rock on top. My mom wrote “Sunshine” on the rock in big letters, and we tried to decorate it with markers, but they didn’t work very well. We put the flowers we had picked in front of the rock, and Roscoe lay down beside it.



“Your paw prints will be forever on my heart.”

~ Anonymous

Suggestions for Helping Children Following the Loss of a Pet

1. The death of a pet is often a child's first experience with significant loss, so their feelings may be unfamiliar, very intense, and even scary. Encourage children to express whatever they feel, whether it is sadness, worry, anger, confusion, or guilt. And let them see your grief too. This helps them realize that difficult feelings are normal and natural and okay to express. Reassure them that, in spite of your grief, you are there to give comfort and support.
2. Children sometimes have trouble putting words to their feelings, and, instead, "act out" their grief. Explain acceptable and unacceptable ways of expressing feelings, and set needed boundaries. Also, maintain normal routines as much as possible to give them a sense of stability and security.
3. Provide children avenues for expressing their grief through drawing, painting, working with clay, writing, and playing. Invite them to talk about their creations. Be patient as they share, and listen for underlying feelings.