

Sandy Reay, Author

December 2023 Newsletter

The word for this month is endings.

A season. A year. A life. A 31-year run.



L to R: Dove, Savoir Faire, Casey, Spirit, Zapp

Times I Didn't Die: The Dog Dream

During a bout of bronchitis (around 2015), I was in bed on an oxygen machine day and night for 5-6 weeks.

I stood barefoot on a rough wood deck in back of a cabin. The sun shone in a clear sky. I was young, thin, healthy again. Thick brown hair hung down to my waist. “I have eight dogs running loose in the forest.”

A man stood next to me. Tall, lean, tan, dark hair, dark eyes. “You round them up. I'll fix the fence.”

I stepped down into lush grass, still dewy, and walked around the cabin. The fence, an orange construction fence, lay flat in the grass. I stepped over it and walked to the front yard, which was shaded by tall pines. The lower branches on the pines grew above my head. Birds twittered in the trees.

Three of my dogs, Faire, Dove, and Casey, saw me and raced to me. I knelt and held them in my arms. Sun-warmed fur, smelling like pine trees, tickled my cheeks, neck, and arms. They licked my face. They were young and healthy again.

I heard a waterfall from behind some bushes. Two more dogs, Zapp and Spirit, ran out of the bushes and stopped when they saw me. Zapp bounced up and down, like he used to do on my bed. I smiled at them. They wagged their tails and disappeared into the bushes.

I stood up. And woke in my bed, drenched in sweat. The fever broke.

But the dream felt real—a full-sensory experience with no time or space gaps, as if I'd crossed over and come back. No shining light. No angels. No out-of-body feeling. Just five dogs waiting for me. Faire was the oldest, raised by [McCavity the Mystery Cat](#). She died in 1988. Zapp was the last to die, in 2012.

I've had two or three dogs at a time for the last 31 years. Faire was the only puppy I adopted since I was an adult. All my dogs since her have been older rescues or fosters from breeders. Sometimes, rescue dogs come bonded to other people.

In my dream, I said, "I have eight dogs" Crash (d. 2021) and Leo (d. 2023) are numbers six and seven. I told them bedtime stories about the five dogs they would meet when it was time for them to cross over.

Now I am dogless. Another dog will find me. And that dog will need a companion. One of them will be the eighth dog.

The Sinister Umbrella

I'm still writing the first-draft of [The Sinister Umbrella](#), a novel about a young woman whose life is destroyed in a car accident and her struggle to build a new life. It's a young-adult horror story, with a touch of humor and a twist (or three). If you want to know more, click on the link.

Bob S told me that I'd created the most powerful villain ever: she could kill the President of the United States and get away with it. This might change the entire story arc. Or not.

Monthly email.

Theoretically, I'm working on [The Sinister Umbrella](#) and Version 12 of my memoir, [You Are the Road That Led Me Home](#). And I planned to have this email out on Dec. 16. But, Leo died early that morning. My handyman and I started building a closet in the library, to turn it into another bedroom. My first new car since 1987 has just over 2,000 miles and is waiting for a part. And I fell off a curb three days ago. I think the best thing I can do is stay in bed until January.

If you wish to unsubscribe, please reply and put "unsubscribe" in the subject or text. I won't send another. Unless you reply after the next monthly email. I have no idea when that will be, but I'll try for Jan. 15. I'd keep my fingers crossed, but it's hard to type that way.

If you want to read past newsletters, check out [Archives](#).

Necessary blah blah

I add content to my author website when the inspiration strikes (usually monthly) and mention what's new on the home page. For those of you who are worried about the "Not Secure" message at the top of my website: that means I didn't pay for a certificate because I don't do online commerce. All my websites display information. I don't collect or save your information **unless you choose to email me**. (I've been building web sites since 1998; I keep 'em simple and watch out for suspicious files on my server.) You could follow me on Facebook. I post there more often.

[Sandy Reay, Author](#) – ideas to encourage creativity, where to find inspiration, short stories, micro & flash fiction, true stories, and a memoir (in progress for a decade—don't hold your breath)

[Colorado Sandstorm Music](#) – songs and poems written and co-written by Sandy Reay and Friends, and an online Cowboy Poetry Book: [Another Horse to Saddle](#)

[Colorado Sandstorm Productions](#) – info about all the other websites plus concerts and songwriting workshops by national touring songwriters

[AcousticByLines](#) – when and where you can hear musicians, co-writers, and find me sometimes

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