

BEYOND THE RAINBOW BRIDGE

An Honest Guide for Families Who Aren't Sure Yet

By Ryan Mitchell,
Founder, Space Beyond

“ A NOTE FROM RYAN

This started with a surprised look on people's faces.

Right after I founded Space Beyond, I was telling friends and family about Ashes to Space, and eventually I'd get to the price. \$249. Their eyes would light up every time. More than one person said some version of the same thing: at that price, people are going to want to fly their pets too.

And they were right. I had heard it enough times, and I couldn't stop thinking about it. The whole mission behind Space Beyond is making space accessible to everyone. I just hadn't thought all the way through who "everyone" included.

Now, I am not a grief counselor. I am not a veterinarian. I am an aerospace engineer who spent nearly a decade helping build the first New Glenn rockets at Blue Origin, and years before that working on the Space Shuttle program.

What I know about pet loss, I learned from the families who trusted me with something precious, from real research into a kind of grief that doesn't always get the room it deserves, and from my own experience. I grew up with a scrappy black-and-white street cat named Oreo, who spent countless hours with me on my porch as a teenager and moved with me into my first home as an adult. Years later, right after I got married, a lab named Jada joined our family and stayed with us through those early parenting years, patient even when our kids got a little rough with our aging pets. Taking those last trips to the vet with each of them, at the end, were some of the hardest things I've ever done. I know what it is to drive home with an empty collar and an empty seat beside me.

I started Space Beyond because I believed orbital space memorials should be affordable for any family, not just the wealthy. Along the way, I learned how many people are quietly grieving a pet, and how few resources exist to help them feel like that grief is real.

This guide is my attempt to change that, at least a little. It covers every meaningful option I am aware of for a pet's ashes, whatever that pet was, dog, cat, bird, horse, rabbit, anything you loved. It includes what each option costs, who it tends to be right for, and what to think through before you choose.

Where I have a conflict of interest, in the section on space memorials, I will tell you so directly.

I hope something in these pages helps.



Ryan Mitchell
Founder, Space Beyond
Satellite Beach, Florida
ashestospace.com

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Skimmer: Read the bold text, callout boxes, and section openers. About ten minutes.

Deep reader: The full text has the context and honest details that tend to matter with a decision like this.

PART ONE:

WHERE YOU ARE



You Are Not Behind

The short version: Grief over a pet is real grief. If it hasn't felt like the world agrees with that, you're not imagining it, and you're not alone. There is no deadline, and this doesn't have to be one decision, forever.

If you found this guide, there's a good chance a box or urn holding your pet's ashes has been sitting somewhere in your home for longer than you expected.

There's a name for what you might be feeling, and it might help to know it.



Grief researchers call it **disenfranchised grief**:
a loss that is not or cannot be openly acknowledged, socially sanctioned, or publicly mourned.

Not because your grief is smaller. Because the world hasn't always given it the same permission to be grieved out loud.

If you've been carrying this more quietly than you wanted to, that's not a flaw in you. That's just what happens when the people around you haven't lost what you lost.



Three things worth knowing before you read any further:

- ★ You can divide the ashes. Most families do a main memorial and a keepsake or two, not one all-or-nothing choice.
- ★ You can wait. Keeping ashes safely at home for months, or years, is common. There is genuinely no deadline.
- ★ Most choices are reversible. A container can be swapped later. Jewelry can be made whenever you're ready. It's really only scattering, and a few permanent art pieces, worth slowing down on.

Take whatever time this takes. _____

If You're Carrying Guilt About the Decision

The short version: If you made the decision to say goodbye, through illness, age, or a hard medical choice, the guilt that follows is common, and it isn't evidence that you did anything wrong.

Not every loss in this guide happened suddenly. Many pet owners face something human loss rarely asks of us directly: choosing when.

If that's part of your story, you may already know the question that keeps surfacing.

Did I wait too long? Did I decide too soon?

This is one of the most common thoughts people carry after this kind of decision, common enough that grief counselors have a name for the pattern. It doesn't mean you got it wrong. It means you loved someone enough that the decision mattered, and your mind is still trying to make sense of an impossible choice.

The illness, or the age, or the accident made the ending necessary. You made the ending humane. Those are different things, even when grief tries to blur them together.

If this is sitting heavily on you, it deserves more than a page in a guide.

Two real places to turn:



The Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement (aplb.org) is a nonprofit staffed by trained pet loss grief specialists, with free chat support for exactly this.



Cornell University's Pet Loss Support Hotline (vet.cornell.edu) is staffed by veterinary students trained in grief support, free, by phone.

The One Question That Changes Everything

The short version: Stop asking "what should I do?"
Ask instead: how do I want to remember them on an ordinary Tuesday?



The wrong question: What should I do with their ashes?



The better question: How do I want to remember them, not on the anniversary, not on a hard day, but on an ordinary Tuesday, doing nothing in particular?

The first question invites guilt, comparison, and other people's opinions about what's normal. The second one is smaller, and somehow clearer. It's not asking you to solve grief. It's just asking what kind of daily presence would feel right.

A few shapes that answer tends to take:

If you want...	That might mean...
Close and comforting	Nearby, visible, gentle
Private and simple	Safe, but not a daily focal point
Out in the world	A place to visit or return to
Made into something	Art that carries a piece of them forward
Shared	So everyone who loved them has something of their own

None of these are wrong.
Whichever one sounds most like you is usually the one worth starting with.

If Someone Told You "It Was Just a Pet"

The short version: That phrase, and others like it, are common, well documented, sometimes well intended, and wrong. You don't need to argue with anyone who said it. And you don't have to believe it.

If someone has already said something like this to you, you're not alone, and it says nothing true about what you lost.

Grief researchers and veterinary counselors have documented the phrases that tend to cause the most pain for grieving pet owners

"It was just a dog." "You can always get another one." "It was probably their time." Every one of these minimizes something real, or treats a specific, irreplaceable relationship as replaceable.



You don't owe anyone a defense of your grief. You're allowed to simply not agree, and move forward in whatever way feels true to what you actually lost.

PART TWO:
THE OPTIONS



PART TWO: THE OPTIONS



A note on honesty: What follows is my best attempt at a fair, honest overview of every meaningful path for a pet's ashes, any species, any size. For each: what it is, who it tends to be right for, real costs, and what to think through. Prices are approximate as of this writing.



A quick practical note first: if you're transferring ashes yourself at any point, work on a cleared table with a towel down, and wash your hands after. A small funnel and a quiet moment make it easier.

Option 1: Keeping Them Close

The short version: The most common choice, and for many families, the final one. Nothing about it has to be permanent or decided today.



What it is: Keeping the ashes at home, in whatever container feels right, in whatever place feels right. This includes leaving them exactly as they arrived from the crematory, that counts too, it's not a placeholder, it's a real choice.



Who this tends to be right for: Anyone who wants their companion nearby. Anyone not ready for another decision, and who doesn't need to be.



What to consider: A container that reflects who they were changes the experience, a favorite color, a shape that fits their personality, somewhere in your home that already feels like theirs. [Etsy](#), specialty pet memorial retailers, and dedicated sites like [Mainely Urns](#), all carry a wide range, from simple to fully custom-engraved.

Many families place it wherever the pet used to sleep, then move it later, once the sharpest part of the ache has softened.

If the original container is cardboard, a sealed bag inside a sturdy box protects it from moisture until you're ready to choose something else, if you ever are.



Cost range: Original container, free. A dedicated urn, \$40–\$250. A photo frame or shadow-box style memorial, \$35–\$180.

Option 2: A Place to Return to

The short version: Burial at home, or in a pet cemetery, gives you somewhere specific to go. Worth thinking about whether that place stays reachable if life changes.



What it is: Burial in a yard, garden, or dedicated pet cemetery, sometimes paired with a marker, a stone, or a small plaque.



Who this tends to be right for: Families who want a fixed spot to visit, especially if the pet had a favorite place outdoors already. Barefoot in the grass, coffee in hand, on an ordinary morning.



What to consider: Check local rules before home burial, some places restrict it. Your veterinarian's office is often the fastest way to find a reputable pet cemetery near you. If you think you might move, some families bury a portion and keep a portion elsewhere, so the memorial doesn't depend on staying in one house forever. A columbarium niche offers similar permanence without needing land of your own.



Cost range: Home burial, minimal, cost of a marker if you choose one. Pet cemetery plot, \$200–\$2,000+. Columbarium niche, \$300–\$2,500+.

Option 3: Letting Go

The short version: Scattering somewhere meaningful is common, and often deeply healing. You don't have to scatter everything.



What it is: Releasing ashes at a place that mattered, a trail, a lake, a familiar corner of the yard.



Who this tends to be right for: Families who already picture a specific place, the dog who needed a walk in every kind of weather, the cat who owned the backyard.



What to consider: Scattering is permanent, and worth choosing a calm morning rather than a windy one, low to the ground, so the moment feels the way you want it to. Rules on where you can scatter vary by city and county, a quick call to a local parks or municipal office can save a stressful surprise later. A symbolic portion is enough, you're never required to release all of it. If you'd rather not scatter loose, [OneWorld Memorials](#) makes biodegradable scattering tubes designed specifically for this.



Cost range: Free, if done privately. A scattering tube, if you'd rather not do it loose, under \$50. Biodegradable urn, \$50–\$300

Option 4: Made Into Something You Can Hold

The short version: A small portion of ashes can become jewelry, glass, a stone, or a diamond. Beautiful and personal. Prices vary enormously, worth comparing before you commit.



What it is: A portion of ashes incorporated into something you carry, wear, or display, kept close in a form that doesn't look like grief.

The real range, since this category spans further than almost any other:

Simple keepsakes: a small token, a fillable pendant, a paw-print casting paired with a tiny amount of ashes.

\$15–\$80

Jewelry: worn daily, especially comforting during travel or hard transitions. [Funeral.com](#)'s cremation jewelry collection is a good place to see the range side by side. [Spirit Pieces](#) has some incredibly beautiful pieces.

\$40–\$300.

Glass art: a paperweight, an orb, a pendant, ashes fused into hand-blown glass, catching the light like dust in a sunbeam. Primary provider: [Spirit Pieces](#).

\$120–\$600.

Stone, ceramic, or resin keepsakes: a smooth memory stone, a garden marker, a small sculpture.

\$50–\$300.

Solidified remains: A newer process that transforms cremated remains into smooth, stone-like pieces that can be held, kept, or distributed among family members. Parting Stone is currently the primary provider of this specific service. Primary provider: [Parting Stone](#). Cost:

\$1,195.

This is their standard, all-inclusive price.

Memorial diamonds: real diamonds grown from the carbon in the ashes, a process that takes months. Providers like [Eterneva](#), [EverDear](#), and [MemorialDiamonds.org](#) all work specifically with pet ashes.

\$500–\$10,000+,

with some entry tiers near \$495, and premium colorless stones reaching well into five figures.

What to consider: This is the widest price range of anything in this guide, worth comparing more than one maker before you decide. Ask how a piece seals, and whether the ashes stay visible or fully blend in.

Option 5: A Living Memorial

The short version: Ashes can help support something growing, a tree, a garden, or even a living coral reef. A gentle option, especially fitting for a companion who loved the outdoors or the water.



What it is: A tree, plant, or memorial garden, sometimes with a small amount of ashes worked into the soil. For water-loving companions, an underwater memorial reef is a genuinely beautiful, less-known option.



Who this tends to be right for: Families whose companion loved being outside, or who like the idea of something continuing to grow rather than staying still.



A tree or garden: ashes aren't the same as fertilizer and can affect soil chemistry, a small amount goes a long way, and when in doubt, keeping the urn beside the planting rather than mixing them in is the simpler, safer choice. **\$50-\$300** for a memorial tree kit or planting service.



A memorial reef: Neptune Memorial Reef, off the coast of Key Biscayne, Florida, has a dedicated pet program, with options ranging from open-water scattering at the reef to a permanent, mapped memorial you can visit. Memorial Reefs International offers pet-specific reef memorials at several coastal locations. Both let a pet's ashes become part of a living ecosystem, visited by divers and photographed for you if you can't be there in person. Pet reef options generally run **\$1,300-\$8,000**, depending on whether it's scattering or a permanent structural memorial.

What to consider: Access depends on location, your own yard versus a spot you might move away from, or a reef you'd need to travel or dive to visit.

Option 6: Beyond Earth — Space Memorials

The short version: A symbolic portion of ashes, any species, can be launched into Earth orbit aboard a real spacecraft. Most providers charge the same whether it's a person or a pet, and until recently, that price started around \$5,000. That has changed.

Something I should say before you read this section: space memorials are my industry. Space Beyond is my company. I'll do my best to give you an honest picture of the landscape here too, including providers that have nothing to do with us.



What it is: A symbolic portion of ashes, launched to Earth orbit aboard a real spacecraft, in a designated section built specifically for pets.

This isn't new. Celestis, the longest-standing name in this field, has offered a dedicated pet memorial program since 2014, called Celestis Pets, flying at the same price as their human memorials, roughly \$4,995 for an orbital mission. For most families, that's simply been out of reach.

Space Beyond, my company, changes that part of the equation. Ashes to Space for Pets costs \$249. It flies the same mission as our human Astronauts, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9, launching October 2027, orbiting for approximately five years before a natural reentry like a shooting star.



Who this tends to be right for: This doesn't require you or your companion to have loved space, or science fiction, or anything specific about the stars. It tends to resonate with families whose pet had a restless, adventurous spirit, the dog who needed a walk in any weather, the cat who watched the birds for hours, anything that pulled toward the world outside. It also resonates with anyone who likes the idea that this isn't really an ending, more a continuation in a different form.



A thought on why this feels different : A shelf, or a garden, asks you to come to it, in one place. Space does the opposite. Wherever your kids end up, wherever you move over the years, the same sky sits above everyone who loved this companion. Nobody has to travel anywhere to feel connected. They just have to look up, and know a piece of that companion is still out there somewhere, part of the universe in a new way.

For a pet who was part of a whole household, especially one with kids who may grow up and scatter across different cities, that shared sky can matter more than it seems on paper.



What to look for in any provider: A real launch partner with a track record. Whether the mission is truly orbital, not a brief up-and-down. How long the flight remains in orbit. What happens if a launch fails. Whether the pricing is clear and complete, or leaves room for surprises later.

A note on my own company : I believe this is the most affordable orbital pet memorial available. I encourage you to compare it against anything else you find, and choose whatever feels right for your family.

Option 7: You Don't Have to Choose Just One

The short version: One clear answer is completely fine. But if you find yourself drawn to more than one option, ashes can be divided, and that's fine too.



Some families know exactly which of these feels right, and one clean answer is a good, complete decision. If that's you, there's nothing missing here.



For others, more than one path feels right, and you don't have to choose only one. A portion can go to orbit. A portion can stay home. A portion can be scattered somewhere they loved. All of it is legal, and for many families, it's the most complete way to honor a life that touched more than one part of yours.



A simple way to divide it, if that's where you land: choose the main memorial first, decide how many keepsakes you want, and if you're sharing among family, assign them by name so nobody's guessing later. Transfer slowly, on a calm day.



And if today's decision doesn't feel final, that's because it doesn't have to be. A symbolic portion is exactly that, symbolic, which means there's always room for another one later, a portion to space now, and perhaps another moment marked years from now, an anniversary, a new companion joining your family. Keep the ashes safely for now, choose one small, reversible thing, and revisit anything permanent when it feels steadier. Most of what's in this guide can wait for you.

PART THREE:

FINDING WHAT FEELS RIGHT



A Simple Framework

The short version: A few questions tend to clarify the decision. Work through them at your own pace.



Where would they have wanted to be?

The yard. The water. Somewhere specific. Start with geography.



What mattered most to them?

The outdoors? Company? Naps in the sun? Their nature tends to point toward the right answer.



Who else needs to feel connected to this?

Kids, other family, anyone who loved them too.



Do I want this public or private?

Visible daily, or safely kept without being a focal point.



Am I okay with permanent?

If not, start with something reversible, and slow down before anything that isn't.



What can I actually maintain?

A garden needs tending. Jewelry needs safekeeping. A reef or a niche needs a trip to visit. Choose something that fits your real life, not an idealized one.

If you're still stuck: here's a fallback that works for almost everyone: keep the ashes safely, choose one small, reversible keepsake, and revisit the bigger decision in thirty days. That's a complete plan, not a placeholder.

A Few Questions People Ask, Usually Late at Night



Is it strange to keep ashes at home indefinitely?

No. It's common, and many families keep them for years.



Can I split the ashes?

Yes. A main portion in one place, small amounts elsewhere, jewelry, a second keepsake, whatever fits.



Is it normal to still feel guilty, even now?

Yes, especially if you were the one who made the decision. That feeling tends to soften with time, but it doesn't mean you did anything wrong.



What if I'm afraid of choosing incorrectly?

Start with something reversible. Keep the ashes safe, choose one small thing that brings comfort, and decide on anything permanent once the decision feels steadier.

PART FOUR:

WHEN YOU'RE READY



PART FOUR: WHEN YOU'RE READY

The short version: There is no deadline.

If space ever feels right, Ashes to Space for Pets starts at \$249.



You came to this guide because something brought you here, curiosity, grief, or simply not knowing where to start. I hope something in these pages helped.



There is no deadline on this decision. Whenever the right answer becomes clear, I hope you trust it.



If space resonated, Ashes to Space for Pets starts at \$249 and launches October 2027 aboard SpaceX Falcon 9, fully refundable any time before you send the ashes in. You can learn more at ashestospace.com, or reach out to me directly. I read every email.



If something else resonated more, I'm genuinely glad this guide helped you find it.

To the stars,

Ryan Mitchell

Founder, Space Beyond

ashestospace.com



Prices listed in this guide are approximate as of mid-2026 and may have changed.

Please verify current pricing directly with any provider you are considering.

Space Beyond pricing is current as of publication.