



No Thunderstorms in Heaven

You came to us at the age of three
Rescued from somewhere north of Napanee

You were a challenge, an intense and neglected malinois indeed
My very first of this kind, you made me re-think everything I thought I would need

You took us down so many times to get to other dogs – to attack
You didn't know how to behave, being chained for your first 3 years, out in the back.

You made be a better handler, without a doubt this is true
Maybe because in your heart, a different path for me you knew

For it was two years later that the idea of Spirit Ridge came to us one night
A sanctuary, a rescue, a learning centre – you completed it all, you made it so right

You never left my side, you forced me to be better and stronger, the challenges to meet
All along you got better, stronger and more intuitive while always remaining so sweet

Your Achilles heel were storms of any kind
That's when you spent a lot of time in my arms so I could comfort your mind

Storms and thunder made you pace, cry and drool
Afterwards, it was not unusual for both of us to look like we came out of a pool

When we heard lightning we both trembled in fear
I knew what they did to you, how they stressed you when they were near

But most of the time we had a ton of fun
Especially when we moved to the country with lots of property to explore and run

When we arrived you helped me train all my Spirit Ridge classes
Obedience, Rally, Tracking, bitework – dogs and handlers came in masses

You "retired" at the age of nine giving way to younger Sonic who had been groomed
But you were always there to help "junior" in the event a misstep loomed

In retirement, you helped the broken down, beaten up, shy pups that came to us for help,
You bowed your head to show them there was no need to stress, bark or yelp.

At the ripe old age of twelve you joined our Paws for Literacy gang
where you quickly became a favourite with the kids, once again making a BIG bang.

We had a lot of fun romping through the property too
And, at the age of twelve, you got to herd sheep and sample their poo

At fourteen, yet another trek, this time to the Malinois Nationals, was in store
You left your many new friends and fans loving you so much - they all wanted more

On our last week together we took our first and last trip with our new RV
New bittersweet memories were made as you struggled to stay close to me

But alas, all things must pass and it is time for me to honour my contract
For the pain you are feeling has shown that it is time
To make that one last trip to the vet, to keep our mutual pact
So that, once again, everything will be fine

It all started out, twelve years ago, with me wanting to learn to take care of you
But, now, it turns out that YOU took care of me all these years, who knew?

Now that all is said and done and you are gone, know this my proud, handsome big Z
Where you are now, you are fearlessly running free
Shed the painful, arthritic, body that weighed you down
There are no thunderstorms in heaven to scare you or make you frown

**In memorium – Spirit Ridge's "Zorro" (1999-2014)
Gone but never forgotten.**

