

# People I Sleep With



Jill Fineberg lives and works as a photographer, grief counsellor and intuitive healer in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She has a degree in journalism and as a professional photographer, her work has appeared in many publications including Time, Newsweek and People. People I Sleep With is Jill's pet project, capturing the special bond between some very special creatures, both domestic and exotic, and their beloved human guardians. This powerful collection of images is poignant, provocative, and whimsical. Each photograph captures the effortless intimacy between species as they sleep, sometimes tenderly intertwined, sometimes not even touching, yet always quietly, undeniably connected.



Assistance Dog Chip with John Chisholm

John is a joy. Although serious about his life and his responsibilities, he has a wonderful sense of humour and refreshing perspective. Born with cerebral palsy and confined to a wheelchair, John was nineteen and a half and a high school senior when I met him and Chip, his yellow Lab from Assistance Dogs of the West. Thanks to a problem in the film processing, I had to re-shoot Chip and John and was so grateful for the chance to work with them again. Chip handles his tasks with such concentration and dedication. But it's the emotional support he gives that is almost incalculable. As if high school isn't hard enough for a teenager, John's physical limitations have led to many lonely times when he was deliberately left out or just socially invisible. Chip changed all that. "Since I got Chip, I get a lot more attention. I think people were reluctant to approach me because they didn't know how. But Chip attracts people like a magnet."

In the fall of 1997, I made a trip to Birmingham, Alabama, to stay with my mother Mickey. We were very different people, with hugely divergent priorities in life, and completely opposite worldviews. And, of course, as is often the case, we were also a lot alike.

This particular trip home, I brought a "new" used camera to try out. Photography was one of my few interests that my mother could not only relate to, but actually praise. Her bedroom walls were covered with my photographs. So I shot a roll of 120 film of Mickey and her beloved Chihuahua, Sophie, in bed together early one cool autumn morning.

Through the lens, I saw my mother succeed brilliantly in the role of dog companion, with more purity of heart and intention than she ever accomplished with other humans. She showered Sophie with compliments, attention, patience, and with an affection I rarely experienced as her daughter.

Two years later, on October 1, 1999, my mother died. We had long before agreed that upon her death, I would bring Sophie back to my home in New Mexico and fit her into my life. Exactly two weeks after my mother died, the tiny dog walked out into my street directly in front of a pick up truck. It was a clear decision to rejoin her dear friend Mickey. I know. I was there. I held Sophie in my lap while her soul left her body.

Two blessings came from Sophie's death. The first was, prior to that moment, every time I tried to be still, or pray, or meditate, or attempted to contact the essence of my mother on the other side, I was overtaken with feelings of fear and confusion. These feelings were not mine. They were my mother's. Her death had been sudden. It felt to me as if she was unsure of where she was and how she might proceed; this was coupled with a seemingly overwhelming sense of isolation and loneliness. At the instant Sophie left her body, I sensed my mother relaxing on the other side. She seemed suddenly more able to accept and deal with her task at hand.

Six years passed. When I opened my camera bag for the first time since 1997, I found a canister of unprocessed film at the bottom of the bag. In my twenty-five-year career as a photographer, I had never left a roll of exposed film unprocessed. Curious, I took it to my lab. It was a forgotten roll I had shot of Mickey and Sophie in bed on that autumn morning in Alabama. All these years later, the images of their love together made me cry.

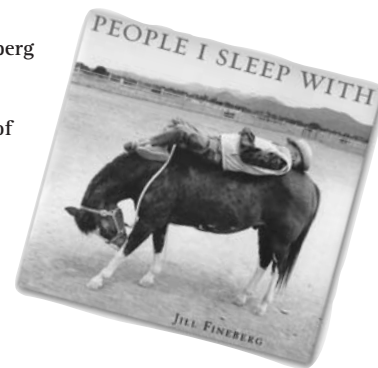
I wondered how many people in the world experience this kind of joyous nourishment and sublime delight with their pets. So, once again, I began to take pictures for this book. Six years after the fact, I decided to finish what I had started, inspired by an elderly woman and a tiny dog with a giant heart. I felt their presence, and their encouragement, at every photo shoot.

So now you know that People I Sleep With is not about my intimate sexual escapades. (Believe me, you don't want to know.) It is about intimacy and those we let into our beds. And it turns out who you sleep with really does matter.

My friend, holistic Veterinarian Dee Blanco, explains that in traditional Chinese medicine it is taught that when humans are in deep sleep, their souls lie at rest in 'liver energy.' The expression of this energy includes safety, vulnerability, and tender sacred space. Therefore, "the bed is holy ground, best shared with our beloveds, and with those we most trust-furlined or otherwise."

We accept their variety, their textures, their colours, their varied dispositions, and their many individual ways of relating. They lie with children, elders, white people, Jews, Christians, Buddhists, gays, straights, women, men, rich and poor.

Extract and photographs from  
People I Sleep With by Jill Fineberg  
\$29.95 Ten Speed Press.  
Available now in bookstores.  
Re-printed by kind permission of  
Simon and Schuster.



## VetStop Shop

Stop paying  
too much!

All you need for your pet:  
Flea control, heartworm, supplements,  
joint care, treats, toys, ear care, beds,  
dental care & much, much more ...

[www.vetstop.com.au](http://www.vetstop.com.au)

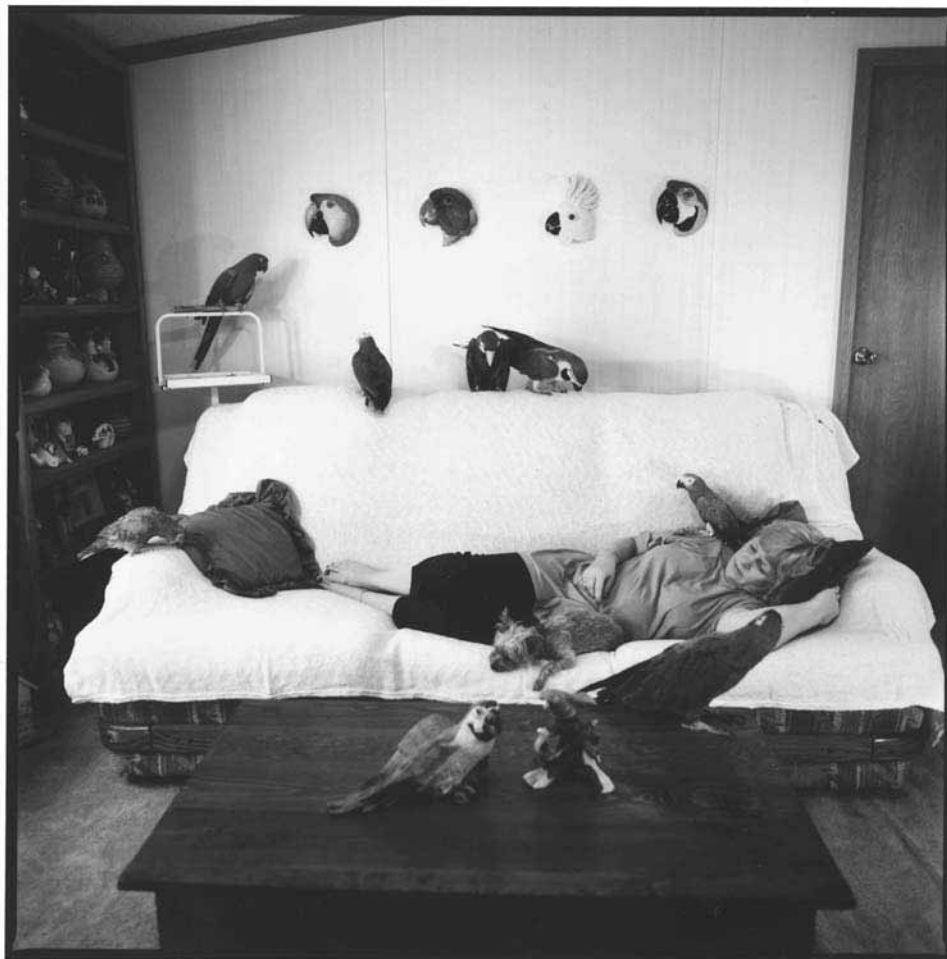




Molly & Brigette with Sam Matthews


Baby Sam is my godchild. I was with him the night he came into the world. He is the son of my dear friend, Pam. She explained that her dogs, already nearly ten and thirteen when Sam was born, became very depressed when the new baby came home. Molly was curious but Brigette wanted nothing to do with him. "I've always been incredibly touched by the profound way my dogs have taken care of me. They've been through so many changes with me, but this was completely different. They lost their place in the pecking order, Pam explained." Now that Sam is a little older, I asked her how they respond to one another. "Slowly they're developing a rapport. The photo says it all. Sam and the girls are sleeping together, but they're not in a big pile. The dogs understand that this is my child and, for that reason, they would protect him. But there's still a little distance between them."

*"The bed is holy ground,  
best shared with our beloveds,  
and with those we most trust-  
furlined or otherwise."*



Gucci, Harley, Beau, Scooter, Lexi, Marvin, Echo & Chelsea with Pat Wright

The first thing Pat said when I arrived for the shoot was, "I hate to have my picture taken. I'm doing this only because I want my birds to be shown off. I love them that much!" And there was no way I could miss her devotion to them—their animated exchanges were a joy to witness. Pat confided that from the age of four she has a recurrent dream of flying. She would look up at the sky and feel her body soaring across her front lawn. It wasn't until she was nineteen when Pat met her first bird, a friend's parakeet. It was immediate love. Prior to that moment, she thought birds were just creatures that sat in cages looking decorative. When I asked Pat how her birds affected her, she said: People simply don't know who I am until they come to my house and see me with my animals. This is Pat. They define the person that I am. You know, Jill, I just don't get people who don't love animals. I can't relate to them at all.

**pets**  ON BROADWAY

Shop 210 Broadway  
Shopping centre  
Ph:02 92801624


AND


Shop 25 Rhodes Waterside  
Shopping centre  
Ph:02 97362100

...the responsible pet people

[www.petsonbroadway.com.au](http://www.petsonbroadway.com.au)

Pets on Broadway is an  
accredited member of

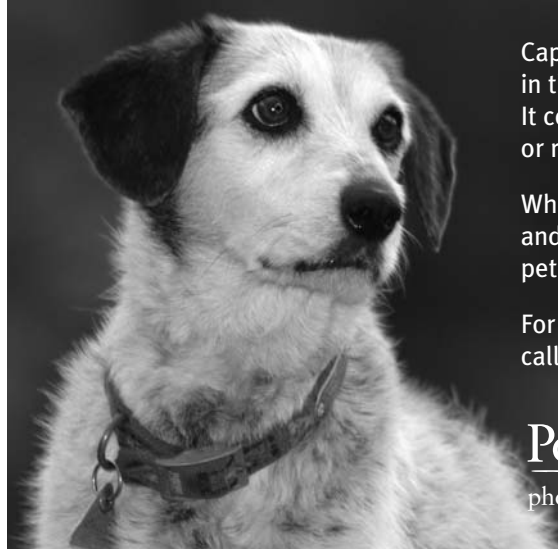
**PIAA**  PET INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA LTD




Franki & Dauphi with Steffan Soule

I wanted to photograph someone with a full body tattoo sleeping with, specifically Dalmatians. When I asked at the Four Star Tattoo parlor, the person at the desk yelled out. "This woman wants someone with a full body tattoo who has dogs!" Everyone in the place yelled back in unison. "Steffan!" That's how I met Steffan Soule, a caretaker on the estate of Gloria and Phil Cowen. Dauphi, the Cowan's black male toy poodle, used to fly to and from New York with them. But once they got Franki, a black female standard poodle, the logistics became too complicated. Sleepovers with Stefan satisfied the problem. And the contrast of dark graphics on pale skin against black dogs satisfied me. "The Designs," Steffan explains, "reflect my inner being and include the elements—water, air, earth and fire. My right sleeve has earth symbol; the left depicts water; air is on my back; and when I'm finished, my left leg will have fire."

## Professional pet photographers



Capture your 'best friend' at home or in their favourite environment. It could be in a local park at the beach or right at home in their kennel.

Where ever it is, we will come to you and capture a lasting memory of your pet or pets.

For a booking or more information call us on 9890 3536.

**Portraits @ home**  
photography studio that comes to you