

# 'I've learned the language of Spirit'

Diehard sceptic and former war correspondent **Karen Frances McCarthy** never imagined how her relationship with her fiancé would transform after a shock event

**C**all me', I texted Johann\*, my fiancé of four weeks. 'I miss you'. Not long after, I got a call from his friend James. They'd been out cycling and Johann had complained of a pain in his arm, before collapsing.

His heart had given out. He was just 41. We'd met at a party in New York City and it was love at first sight. Despite that, it took four years of love and tears, before we polished ourselves into a compatible form.

When Johann died, I was working hundreds of miles away in North Carolina. I was a diehard spiritual sceptic who'd long since left behind the Catholic church that was so prevalent in my upbringing in Ireland.

The thought of returning to our Brooklyn apartment was unbearable, and luckily I was spared that. A friend persuaded me to house-sit for someone she knew in Chesapeake Bay, Virginia, who was going away for a while.

I had no idea where the place was, but all I knew was it was better than going home. Exhausted, I fell asleep on the bed as soon as I got there. For 20 hours, I was in oblivion, immune to the pain of a broken heart.

When I woke up, something was moving on the bed. There were small, round indentations tip-toeing up the duvet!

I couldn't understand how they were being made. They stopped on reaching my head. 'They're just a trick of the light,' I said to myself, before turning over, desperate to be anaesthetised by sleep again.

That was just the start of the strangeness. Floorboards creaked as if trodden by unseen feet. Lights came on. I had an uncomfortable feeling of someone lurking in the shadows.

One night I was jolted awake by the sound of the old bedframe groaning under a great weight. Someone had sat down on the bed. Someone big. Someone silent.

Oh my God. I need to call 911.



In Tryon, North Carolina, home to the Light Haven Spiritual Centre

*'I realised my new purpose was to be a lightworker'*

It took me all my courage to get out of bed and tear into the kitchen where my phone was. The windows were closed, the doors locked. No one could have got in. What was going on?

I sat outside on the porch in the dark, until I convinced myself I'd imagined it all and was brave enough to head back inside.

This is so stupid, I told myself.

Four years earlier, I'd spent the summer in Iraq as an embedded journalist with the Stryker Division and Mountain Division. Now, here I was, quaking in my boots over 'things that go bump in the night'.

Not brave enough to creep back upstairs, I curled up on the sofa in a throw, but it was dawn before I was calm enough to sleep.

As I was dropping off, the air around me seemed to change, growing warmer, softer. Then a feather-like sensation brushed my forehead and eyelids, like little kisses that felt familiar, but I couldn't remember why.

It got to the point where I wondered if I was going mad or having a breakdown.

## An awakening

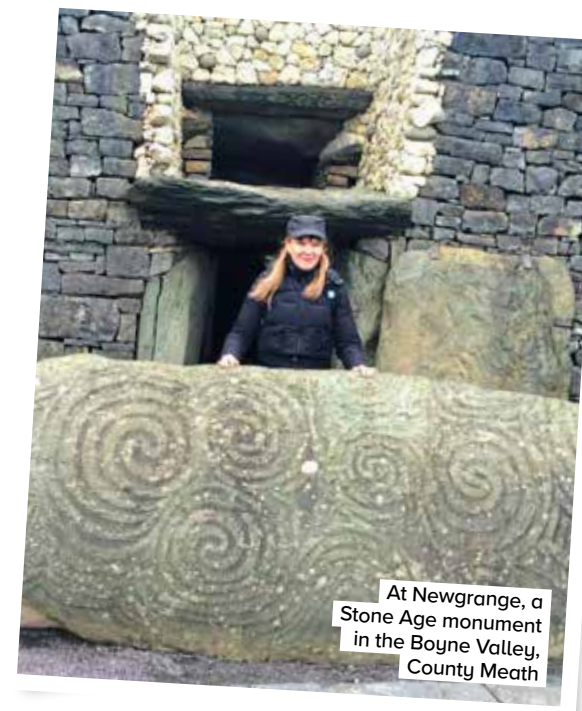
Out on a walk one day, I strayed across a Catholic church. I found myself drawn inside and it wasn't long before I was spilling all to the priest, Father Peter.

'These things are common in bereavement. It's just our loved ones letting us know they're OK,' he smiled.

I wanted to believe this so much, but my cynicism over-ruled that desire.

That said, an internet search one day led me to a book called *Love Lives On* by a professor who'd spent 25 years investigating what he called 'extraordinary encounters' – signs from loved ones. Could he be right? Does something survive when all of this dies?

That afternoon, I slept lightly and dreamt Johann was lying beside me, arm around my waist and his breath on my neck. It felt so



At Newgrange, a Stone Age monument in the Boyne Valley, County Meath

real, and he felt so present. I couldn't remember feeling happier.

Days later, I was sitting on a bench when a lady named Millie, who I'd seen in the church when I'd spoken to Father Peter, came over.

We got talking, sharing the pain of lost love. Her husband had passed away five years before and she told me of a Spiritualist church nearby.

I decided to go, purely to observe, of course. But I got way more than I'd bargained for.

I discovered I had a gift for psychometry and was told, 'there's a young man behind you. He's tall, blonde, very protective of you, and not long in the spirit world. Do you know him?'

My awakening was underway. Just as Millie had led me to the Spiritualist church, other people came into my life, introducing me to all manner of spiritual aspects and thinking.

My spiritual journey continued. And, all the while, the experiences that suggested Johann was still around continued too.

One morning, I woke in the early hours to the smell of him. It was so intense, as if he was right there beside me. I saw him in dreams too, although I didn't know if it was just a dream or whether his spirit had visited me.

All I knew was he felt so real and when I'd said, 'Oh my God. Johann, it's you. You're here,' I heard him reply, 'Yes, it's me.'

Maybe I was overthinking things, but I still couldn't get past how consciousness could survive outside the brain. What I needed was an 'aha' moment...

As I paddled in the ocean near the house one day, a large butterfly crashed into my head. What's with all the butterflies in this place? There had been an epidemic of them, and one had even followed me on my walk.

Oh my God.

I remembered Johann's dry sense of humour. He wouldn't send me one butterfly – he'd send me 100!

I sat there for a few minutes, willing myself to ask the question. Finally. Are you sending me butterflies? A monarch butterfly fluttered by, landed on my foot, and sat there with wings erect. Johann, it is you!

## Finding purpose

My house-sitting stint was over and it was time to go home to the place where Johann and I had been so happy together.

Back in New York, I felt, smelt and heard Johann regularly.

In a park where he and I had idled away many lazy afternoons, I asked: 'Can you hear me? I'm in McGolrick Park'.

In response, a bolt of electricity crackled across my face. The strangest sensation.

That feeling of static on my skin, caressing my eyes like kisses, happened so many times, shaking me out of the past and my pessimism.

And when I accepted I had a psychic ability, and developed it through mediumship and spiritual development classes, my connection with Johann became even stronger.

I learned to sit in my power and expand into the universe – expanding my subtle, or astral, body from my physical one.

And when I did that, Johann emerged from the light and stood in front of me, wearing the royal blue shirt and jeans he was wearing in a photo I had of him. Not only could I see him more clearly than ever, I could feel him more strongly, as if he were out there and within me at the same time. We had 'blended'.

Johann handed me a tiny box on which was written: *I love you from the bottom of my heart. I love you more than you know.*

In time, I realised my new purpose was to be a lightworker, using my psychic skills to bring comfort and hope to others.

So that's what I do. I'm a medium, author and speaker. I have a mediumship and healing practice with clients around the globe and teach in the USA, Ireland and online.

After he passed, 13 years ago now, Johann and I grew and learned together. It was our purpose, to help people through the veil.

Novelist, speaker and political scientist Elif Shafak said: 'Every true love and friendship is a story of unexpected transformation.'

How true that is of Johann and me.

✦ **More info** [karenfrancesmccarthy.com](http://karenfrancesmccarthy.com)

**Til Death Don't Us Part** by Karen Frances McCarthy (White Crow Books, £11.99)

\*Name has been changed



## The healing power of colour

This spiritual tool can help ease the pain of loss

**Y**ou may have heard energy healers talk about calling on white light for protection. Well, think of the violet flame as white light's distant cousin – a supercharged form of universal energy.

This colourful spiritual tool can help soothe you as you move through the

grieving process of losing a loved one – possibly the most painful emotional experience any of us ever have to bear.

We are frequently drawn

*'Be soothed as you grieve'*

to the same person throughout many lifetimes and the separation we feel may be much deeper than we realise.

Use the violet flame affirmation, 'Be soothed as you grieve' every day for a number of months.

This will help soothe you as you move through the grieving process. ✨