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Bob Dole. The First Anniversary.

Mon, 2012-09-03 11:16 — Robin Olson

Grief: a 5-letter word that describes a facet of human emotion triggered by the loss of a loved one. How long grief lasts or how powerful its' effects can't be measured. For some, a loss is understandable, expected, perhaps only bittersweet. It's a gentle feeling often accompanied by saying things like; *"they're in a better place"* or *"they're no longer suffering."*

For me, after the loss of my cat Bob Dole, the grief comes in fierce waves; arriving not on tidal terms, but seemingly random ones that knock me to my knees. I don't think Bob's in a better place. Being with me was better. Now he's just gone.



©2007 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob.

Bob died a year ago today ⁽¹⁾ after suffering from multiple forms of cancer which ravaged his FIV+ body. He died at home, with his family at his side. After he passed I went into a deep depression. Bob was my last living link to my Mother and now that was gone.

Bob had amazing charisma. Everyone recognized it when they met him. The second they heard his name was *Bob Dole*, they laughed, charmed by his silly name. Once they spent even a few moments with him, I could see the look on their face soften to one of utter adoration.

Bob was the kind of cat you just loved the second you met him. The cat purred all the time—this goofy, burbly, purr. Bob's last purr was a few hours before he died. I happened to have recorded the sound. I don't have the nerve to listen to it again, but I hope one day I can hear it and not be devastated.

Bob was in charge of all the cats and kept power until the last few months of his life. Bob was fearless from living for years outdoors, some of those on his own as a stray. I've said it before and I'll say it again; Bob wasn't neutered until he was well into adulthood. **Though I am adamant that cats be spayed or neutered, I'm secretly glad there are probably baby Bob's out there somewhere.**

Bob seemed more like a human wearing an orange long-haired coat, than he was a cat.



©2010 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob's favorite spot in the sun.

Grief grabs you by the shoulders and shakes you hard. It wakes you up or it makes you want to sleep until the feeling passes. Sadly, the feeling doesn't really pass. It lies dormant, catching you off guard at odd times like on the first nice spring day when normally I'd put out the deck chairs and cushions so Bob would have a place to relax outside. I didn't go out on the deck other than to fill the bird feeders. **With Bob gone no one went out on the deck this year. I just couldn't bring myself to set up the deck furniture.** I didn't want to set out the lime green cushions that reminded me of the color of Bob's eyes. If I did that I knew I'd keep looking for him to appear, spread out on the chair, clearly loving life, not bothered to even look up if a bird flew right over his head.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Near the end, ravaged by ringworm, Bob was still beautiful to me.

As I get older, I find that there's more grief in my life than love or happiness. Doing cat rescue there is so much grief over the loss of newborn kittens or knowing those cats you're trying to rescue don't make it out of the shelter alive. I know so many "cat people" that of course their cats pass away, too and I share in their loss.

Some of my friends have died. I don't feel "that old" where my friends should pass away or get stricken with cancer (*which triggers a whole other form of grief*).

It's been a year since Bob died. I honored him by rescuing an orange tabby cat I named Bobette, along with rescuing her six newborn kittens ⁽²⁾. Three of the kittens passed away within the first few days—a tragic loss after just losing Bob. The others did well and all the cats have since been adopted into great, loving homes.



©2011 Betsy Merchant. Cat at animal control who would later become the beloved *Kissy of Paws and Effect* ^[3]. Her surviving kittens, Jakey, Teddy & Mikey are about to celebrate their first birthday with their families.

My friend Warren, of *Royal Bobbles* ^[4], honored Bob by creating a custom “Bob-blehead” of him as a gift. It’s something I will always cherish.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Shrine for Bob featuring the custom sculpted Bobblehead on the left.

I’d like to do something more to honor Bob. Perhaps I’ll start a special fund for him or rescue more orange tabby cats. I’d like to do something positive with all this pain, but it’s a struggle not to let depression take over.

The energy in the house just doesn’t feel “right” any more. I can’t explain it. It’s not as if I don’t have any cats. There was something I felt in my heart that’s gone. There’s a queer emptiness to the house. The places where I’d often find Bob are empty. I can’t get over the feeling of wishing he would come back or that I could see him again, in all his magnificent glory, when he was healthy and well.



©2006 Robin A.F. Olson. Not long after adopting him after my Mother passed away-Bob in his full glory.

Some people believe we see our loved ones again after we die. I don't know if that's true, but I do know if that does happen that one day I will be covered in cat hair in heaven, too.

I miss you so much, Bob. I always will.

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Comments

Mon, 2012-09-03 11:24 — [Gracey, The Tin... \(not verified\)](#) ^[16]

[Sending hugs and purrs](#) ^[17]

We are thinking of you. Sending you hugs and purrs.

Mon, 2012-09-03 11:53 — Catnymouse (not verified)

[Hugs to you](#) ^[18]

Bob was a stunning cat. I know the hurt of losing a special furred loved one. It is so hard. I am sorry you're dealing with it today.

Mon, 2012-09-03 12:07 — [Connie & The Crew \(not verified\)](#) ^[19]

[Beloved Bob Dole](#) ^[20]

Greif is such a hard emotion to deal with. None of us wants to be known to be the one that wallows in it because we have been taught to shun all those 'dark' emotions. but it is a part of life, and sometimes letting it sit beside you and letting it wash over you is more healing and helpful then trying to hide it from yourself or others.

Mon, 2012-09-03 12:14 — shelley donathan (not verified)

[bob dole](#) ^[21]

Im so sorry for your loss i couldnt get through reading this without bawling,its been a lil over a year since my furbaby died and i fuully believe i will see him again, and yes he was better with me GOD bless you and ease your pain . One day the pain hit me so bad that i had to do something so i went to the store and spent too much money on animal food and donated it to a no

kill shelter. I do understand :)

Mon, 2012-09-03 14:32 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

Bob ^[22]

Beautifully written. I feel your pain as its been less than 2 months since Bentley died. The only thing that makes me feel better is being with my other cats. You ARE doing so much good for the cats of the world. Please don't give up, they need you. And you WILL see Bob again someday, I have faith in that!

Mon, 2012-09-03 19:19 — Carol K (not verified) ^[23]

Bob <3 ^[24]

Bob was floofy, handsome, and very lucky to have had you to care for him. <3 RIP Bob Dole <3

Mon, 2012-09-03 21:13 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

Bob Dole ^[25]

robin, i am so so sorry. i used to be a more regular reader of your blog, but dropped out of the habit when work got too overwhelming - then tonight i found myself thinking about Bob Dole the Cat, and came here again. i once read what someone said about grief - it's not something that you 'get over'; what happens is that you learn how to function with a giant hole in your heart/life. i lost my wonderful adored Frank 2 years ago, and while anyone looking at me might think that i'm sailing along just fine, they aren't there when i look under the kitchen table and can see Frank there, as clear as day, patting the floor impatiently with his front paw to tell me 'breakfast! now!!'. it feels like i've been kicked in the stomach when that happens. if i talk about him to anyone, i still burst into tears. we have 3 other cats - all of whom met their Uncle Frank before he died - and i adore them all with every fiber of my being, but everything changed when Frank left. we were together for 22 years, and he was my connection to....to something, i don't even know quite what. a time in my life when i still felt cheerful & optimistic? i don't really know, but i know that Frank embodied that for me, and when he left, i lost that. i don't know if Bob and Frank are in a better place, but i know that i like to imagine Frank someplace perfect - because i can't bear for my last sight of him to be in the vet's arms, while she carried his lifeless self away from me. but also because he was my best friend, and he was pure love, and he deserved wonderful things - so that's where i see him, surrounded by everything in the world that he loved best. and it pleases me to imagine Bob - glorious, mighty Bob - hanging out alongside him.

i am so incredibly sorry for your loss - kerry

Tue, 2012-09-04 09:47 — Holly (not verified) ^[26]

Wonderful memory post ^[27]

Robin,

I loved reading about Bob Dole - he seems like such a special cat that brought much joy to your life. I hope your grief lessens and that you are able to heal.

Holly

Tue, 2012-09-04 14:51 — Cat Pee Diaries (not verified) ^[28]

Bob is and will be always missed ^[29]

Bob I hope you are enjoying your spot in the sun. We miss you. xoxo

- Sara

Tue, 2012-09-04 14:59 — Robin Olson ^[30]

Thank you so much. ^[31]

Thank you to everyone for your love and support and for sharing your losses with me, too. I wish we could all have a big group hug right now and I wish we could all be with our lost loves again. It's true, we never "get over" these losses-we get on with our life, maybe dragging our feet. After my Dad died, then my mom...I really felt that time passing was cruel. I wanted time to stand still, to honor their passing instead of glide along. It's been 12 years since my dad died and 6 since my mother was gone...time passes along unfazed leaving a wake of tears in its' trail. As for Bob-he was a one-of-a-kind cat. I wish you could have met him.

Wed, 2012-09-05 14:05 — Possumlady (not verified)

Bob and grief ^[32]

I can't even remember how I came upon your blog but just read your post on Bob Dole and it felt like my Butterball dieing all over again. I've let my blog go but you can read about my grief with the death of Butterball in 2008 here:

<http://possumlady.blogspot.com/2008/03/my-main-man.html> ^[33]. What is it about orange cats? All the ones I've known have been so sweet and gentle. I was taking in so many neighborhood strays that by 2008 I had 12 cats. Since then, the number

has sadly been reduced to 6 as of July 4. But, I felt I had to take in just one more cat and adopted a Petsmart cat from Alley cat rescue. I've renamed him Possum and although they said he was around 6, I know he is much older. He is a sweet gray and white boy but again, no Butterball. The first anniversary for me is always the hardest. Take gentle care of yourself. I still miss Butterball to this day but the pain is not so intense. Gentle head bumps to you from my herd of Merry Cats: Sweet Pea, Chunky Lisa, Oliver, Toby, Figaro, Chloe, and now with new (yet old) Possum! Christine, aka Possumlady

Thu, 2012-09-06 09:30 — Anne (not verified)

You Understand!! [34]

You get it. You feel it too. My Bob Dole was Ross. A tuxedo boy who lived to 19. I didnt think anyone else felt a loss the way I do. But, sorry to say, we share our grief for our loves who have gone. My heart aches for you in your loss too.

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