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Bob's Battle with Lymphoma: Arrogance. Part 2 of 5

Wed, 2011-09-07 12:02 — Robin Olson

I don't like to get into a discussion about religion, but I have to admit that if I hadn't spent a few years taking classes in [Shambhala Buddhism](#) ^[1] (a Tibetan form of Buddhism) and taking Refuge as a Buddhist, I never could have handled this situation as I did. I kept reminding myself things that I learned—that it was MY FEAR of watching Bob die that upset me so much. That it was MY FEAR that made me want to call my Vet and have him come over and put Bob to sleep to stop MY SUFFERING over seeing him decline. I didn't want to witness these last days. I wanted to run away. I didn't want to see my once beautiful Maine Coon, fade away into a walking skeleton, with barely a tuft of fur left on his body.



©2005 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob has a bath, while still living at my Mother's house.

But I didn't run.

I stayed put. I did [Tonglen](#) ^[2]. I focused on Bob. I took joy in little things—his interest in eating a bit of baby food, watching his cute, soft tongue gently lap at the plate. He'd often turn his head away when I brought him a snack. He'd rarely eat much of anything on his own. I'd warm the food, I'd sprinkle treats on it. I'd rub a bit on his gums, to get him to taste it. I'd see something spark behind his eyes for a moment, then, he'd suddenly eat a bit while my other cats circled him, hoping to get a bite of that treat, too. I had to stand near Bob with a broom, to keep the cats away. Towards the end, I just held the plate in my hands—an offering to my friend, hoping he would take another mouthful. *"Each bite is a victory for you, Bob" I'd say. "Eat up, Baba-D! Good boy!"*



©2008 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob's favorite place—outside on the deck.

Some times Bob would purr. When he was well, he purred every time we fed him. I found it so endearing. He and Spencer would sit side by side, in the doorway of the kitchen, patiently waiting for breakfast to be served. Spencer got served first, then Bob, then, the others. They'd all go to "their place" and we'd present each cat with a ceramic dish, a dollop of raw food on top. Bob would go to his plate and eat it right up. Some times I had to sprinkle bonito flakes or dehydrated chicken to help him find the scent of the food. He would purr and purr while he ate. I loved that sound. I recorded him purring one night last December. You can hear his "bubbling purr" below.

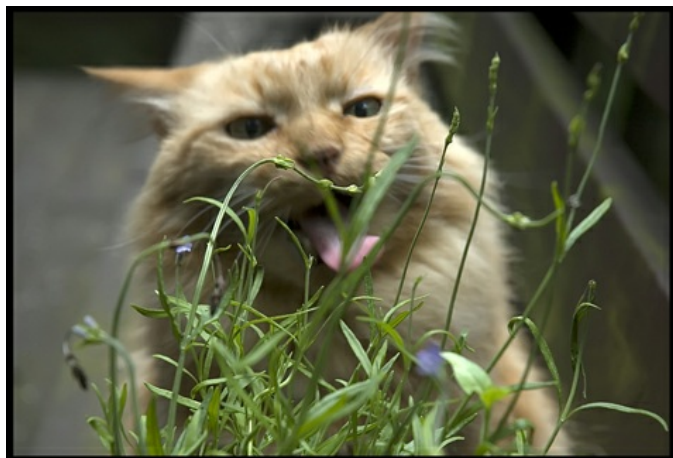
[swf file="Bob_Purring.mp3"]



©2008 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob & Nora were very close pals.

With my friend Jennifer's help, I was able to learn how to home test Bob's blood sugar. She left me with some tools so I could do it myself. We never got his blood sugar to a normal level-it was very high. I started him on insulin, but I was arrogant thinking I didn't have to watch his blood sugar values. I was too scared to try to test Bob's blood, so I just watched him. He was doing ok, but drinking a lot of water-a big sign of a diabetic issue, but he had so many other problems, I could never truly be sure. I made a big mistake. I thought Bob might need more insulin and I gave him a few drops more. In a few days he was doing very very badly. His fur was falling out, he could barely walk, he was emaciated.

I got up the nerve to test his blood sugar. It was 32. He was having [hypoglycemic attack](#) (3) and could have a seizure and die at any moment. How could I have done this to my cat?! I called Jennifer about 10 times. She helped guide me through the process of getting Bob's blood sugar to rise. We gave him kayro syrup. I checked his blood sugar again. I HATED doing it because Bob was so frail, I couldn't easily get blood from his ears. I had to poke him with the lancet over and over again. I cried. I fumed. I cussed! I HAD to do this. I kept saying I was sorry to Bob. He sat there and didn't fuss. He was always a good boy.



©2008 Robin A.F. Olson. No greenery was safe around Bob. Not even this lavender plant-which I had to take away from him after shooting this photo.

Over two hours of small meals every five minutes, some laced with more kayro syrup, Bob's blood sugar rose from 32 to 41, then fell to 36, then came back up to 78, then down to 70. Bob felt well enough to wobble-walk around the living room. He used the corrugated cat scratchers on the floor. He had a drink of water. He used the litter pan, but had the runs-most likely from all the sugar we'd given him...but he was doing a bit better.



©2008 Robin A.F. Olson. Nicky & Bob help me write my Blog in 2008.

His left rear foot was raw and red. We had to keep it clean and free from litter. I would carefully swab between his toes with a Q-tip. I used calendula cream to soothe his skin. Some times we had to fill a small container with warm water and a special cat shampoo to soak Bob's paws. Some times he cried a bit, but he had started to limp a little and we need we had to help him stay comfortable.



©2008 Robin A.F. Olson. Who's my buddy?!

It was a battle every day for a few weeks; making sure I got up early so Bob would be fed. I had to get out fresh water for his bowl because he liked to have a drink in the morning. I kept the litter pan he used spotlessly clean-I scooped it about 5 or more times a day. I kept a schedule of when Bob should be fed. Sam and I took turns or mostly I fed Bob while Sam held and soothed him.

...end of part two...

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Comments

Wed, 2011-09-07 13:26 — [The Florida Fur... \(not verified\)](#) ^[10]

Bob's story ^[11]

How scary the blood sugar drop must have been for you. We can fully understand the feeling of not wanting to check and hoping that you can sense when something is wrong. We also understand the way you felt when you thought you did something wrong by not checking. It's so hard to know what's right and we can only do what our gut tell us to. (((Hugs)))

The Florida Furkids and Angel Sniffie and Mom Sharon

Wed, 2011-09-07 14:51 — [Abby \(not verified\)](#) [12]

Bob [13]

You lovingly let Bob be Bob and I for one am so glad that you let him make his own decision.

xoxoxo
Abby & Mom Debra

Wed, 2011-09-07 16:19 — [Andrea \(not verified\)](#)

Beautiful Purr [14]

Bob had such a wonderful purr. It's very similar to the purr that my own Matilda makes. As I was listening to the sound clip of his purr, Matilda came up next to my computer and began to purr as well. It seemed like such a sweet gesture from a cat.

Fri, 2011-09-09 09:47 — [ZoeEmEffGee](#) [15]

Bob's purr [16]

What a beautiful sound...it's so good to have, so you'll never forget what it sounded like.

Rayne heard me listening, and now she's looking for Bob around my computer desk!

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- [2] <http://www.shambhala.org/teachers/pema/tonglen1.php>
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