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Bob's Battle with Lymphoma: Bob is My Co-Pilot

Sun, 2011-05-29 14:27 — Robin Olson

It's the cusp of June and five months have passed since Bob was diagnosed with small t-cell mesenteric lymphoma. To say I'm surprised he's still with us is an understatement. I'm stunned, a bit in awe...and delighted!

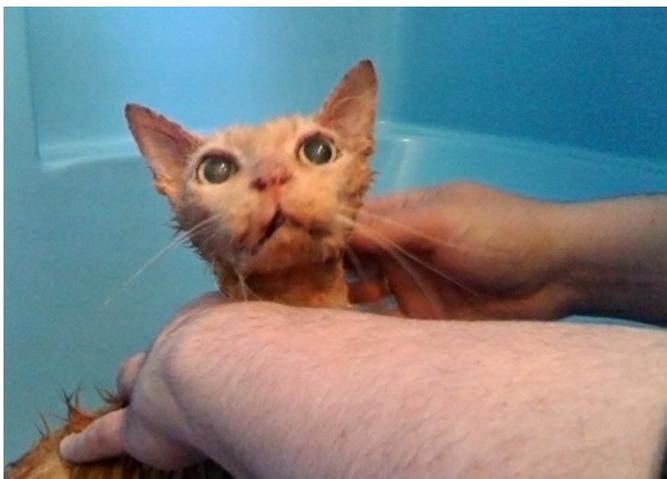
His difficult journey began right before Christmas last year when Bob had 1/2 of his liver removed. It was another form of cancer that's considered gone since the tissue was removed. He recovered from that and we recovered from having to crate him (*we built him a pen to go with his crate-see [HERE](#) (1)*) and fuss over him while he regained his strength and interest in eating.

Of course, being FIV+, Bob picked up the damn ringworm fungus that we know is in the house. Our feline dermatologist told me **I'd have to wait until ALL the cats DIE, repot or get rid of ALL the plants, throw out anything the cats touched or disinfect it, get the ductwork sanitized, change the filter on the furnace, scrub down every item and ever surface in the house, wash every drape, wipe down the blinds, then WAIT TWO YEARS...then it will be gone.** Uh-huh.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. In March, on a cold morning, Bob on his electric blanket. Me, with a heavy heart, as I take the photo. Bob looks terrible.

With Bob's health issues, I could not give him an anti-fungal. It would wreak havoc on what's left of his liver. I didn't want to do too many topicals for fear of him ingesting it. So, in April we started bathing him a few times a week and that helps keep him comfortable and less itchy. After looking at a photo of him from March, I can see he IS getting better and his fur is starting to come back. It's been such a slow change, I could barely tell that he's improved. Now that I see the photos I realize he's looking all right for a sick ol' man.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. An early bath featuring a very scared Bob.

The baths are down to a science. To keep Bob from slipping, I put a bath mat on the inside of the tub. It prevents him from hurting his hind legs even if it DOES give him traction should he want to get OUT. He's not that strong any more, but also, I think he's found a way to sit through it. We quickly wet him down, only getting him wet, then shutting the water off. I don't want the sound of the running water to frighten him. Sam and I furiously lather him up. **Then..the hard part. We have to let it SIT for 10 LONG MINUTES.** Then we can rinse him off, then he gets towel dried, rubbed down with a second lotion, then, to keep him from grooming himself while the lotion dries, we give him some food and we gently brush him.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. We get the hang of it. Now baths take 15 minutes, tops.

Until recently we kept him in our bedroom with a space heater and wrapped him in an electric blanket. He would shiver since much of his coat is gone. Thankfully, with the warmer days, he's more comfortable and we don't have to worry that he will catch a cold on top of everything else.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob seems to like his bath, okay, like maybe not "like" per se.

Bob made it as far as I had hoped. I just wanted him to be able to go outside on our deck, which is 16.6 feet off the ground. I

know this measurement because I scared Bob once and he FELL off the deck. It was a terrible day. (Read about it [HERE](#) (21), but since then he doesn't walk on the railing any more. **He just loves to sleep on his fluffy bed and soak up the sun.**



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. *I wouldn't believe it if I hadn't seen it myself. Bob on May 29, 2011.*

I know, too, that this will help KILL the ringworm, so the more he wants to get outside, the better. I also feed Bob on the deck, a few extra meals. Bob has to eat every few hours. **The cancer absorbs a lot of the nutrition he gets. It's a constant battle to keep loading Bob up with food without the other cats pushing him out of the way to get at it.** I find myself having to guard Bob while he eats. I really want to get back to work, but I know if I move, Bob won't get a full belly. Feeding him a few meals outside worked great, until the other day when I heard a huge crow cawing. I looked outside and saw him in a tree, near the deck, eyeing Bob's leftovers. Then my stomach did a flip and I got Bob to come back inside. **The last thing I need is for the crow to confuse Bob with a meal!**



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. *Bob is a back seat driver, but Sam is being cool about it.*

Bob's still getting Chemo. **We had to opt to do it once every FOUR weeks because we just can't cover the \$600 payment every three weeks.** I'm not even sure how we will keep this going, but we have to find a way. The oncologist said he was looking for problems with Bob, but couldn't find any. Even though Bob lost a few ounces, he wasn't particularly distressed about it. He felt that Bob was responding well to chemo and that **all things considered, Bob was doing great.**



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob, down to 12 pounds, 11 oz. from 16 over a year ago.

Bob is an amazing creature. He has beat SO MANY ODDS-it blows my mind. **He's overcome being homeless, having diabetes, losing many of his teeth due to a very poor diet, treated for Bartonella, had pancreatitis, upper respiratory infections, then everything else with FIV+ and losing part of his liver and now, cancer and yet, he is right here, purring away, eating well.** I even saw him play a little bit. Does this mean Bob is invincible? NO. It does not. It does mean that Bob...well all I can do is shrug my shoulders. I have no answers for how he's still with us, **I'm just REALLY GLAD he's made it this far** (:::knock wood:::). I know it things can change for the worse in a moment.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Chillaxin' in his favorite place. Outside on the deck on a fluffy bed.

It would be greedy for me to want more time with Bob, but I'm game, if he is. If I have to hover over him while he eats for another few years, great. Bring it! Bob climbed into my lap and took a nap the other day. It was the first time he ever did that since I brought him home in 2006 after my Mother (his former Mama) died.



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Watching the world go by at 65 mph.

It's pretty obvious that Bob is my co-pilot. I would be lost without him.

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Comments

Sun, 2011-05-29 14:41 — [Catnymouse \(not verified\)](#) ^[12]

Bob ^[13]

Good job, Robin. He looks really, really good!

Sun, 2011-05-29 14:45 — Daphne (not verified)

naturopathic alternative ^[14]

I don't know why I didn't think of this before, but I just remembered that an acquaintance of mine has been supplementing her cat, who is recovering from cancer and is also a ginger, with a particular kind of mushroom. I'll sift through my facebook mails and see if I can find the old e-mail from her....

Also, have you tried aloe vera for his skin?

Sun, 2011-05-29 17:33 — [Marg \(not verified\)](#) ^[15]

Bob ^[16]

Those are such great pictures. Just goes to show you that miracles happen. Bob sure makes a super co-pilot. I love that part. Take care. Keep up the good stuff Bob

Sun, 2011-05-29 17:44 — Kelsey A Kruse (not verified)

So nice to hear an update on ^[17]

So nice to hear an update on dear Bob! What a sweetie and what a trooper! Thanks Robin! He is so lucky to have you!

Sun, 2011-05-29 18:40 — Anna (not verified)

Bob is looking so much better! ^[18]

We are a ringworm household and the only ones who still have issues are me and the one who brought it into the house when she came to live with us. April thru Sept or so is the season for us, when it gets warm and humid. I've had one spot so far and the girl has the pinhead dot on her right ear that started it all. I have stuff from my dermatologist and I use a lotion on her ear. No one else, including my husband, gets it anymore. My friends have had it in their houses and it's no big deal to any of us anymore. We were pretty freaked out at first, and upon hearing what needs to be done to get rid of it, Mary said you need to burn the house down and salt the earth after that. LOL!! You are doing a great job with good old Bob. (((Hugs)))

Sun, 2011-05-29 19:44 — Dionne Canter (not verified)

Bob ^[19]

Bob is looking fabulous!! Don't you fret for a minute that he is unhappy. He knows he is exactly where he needs to be, and knows you need each other. Your tireless patience and endless love for all these babies makes me want to weep, to do more, to hug my own purrballs a little closer.

As you may know, my Annie had her third stroke a few weeks ago. Her heart murmur is a constant concern that any day she could have another one and be immobilized; I hope that when she does have another one she goes quickly, so her last memory is of home and love. She now squaddles around slow and unsteady, but determined to not let her traitor body get the best of her. She is blind in one eye due to an injury that happened in her abused days before she went to the shelter to find me. It was just a small injury but one of her strokes finished it. She doesn't let that stop her either, just walks a little more crooked to make up for it. She makes it to the litter box on her own, and is somehow always first in the kitchen for dinner. She doesn't like to be petted much anymore; I think it kind of freaks her out to be touched in places she can't really feel; she then scratches herself raw to get rid of the funny feeling. But she certainly demands her chin scratchings!!

My point of all that is that I feel Bob appreciates everything you have done for him, loves you with every piece of fur he has left, and is repaying you by staying around and sharing in your love until you are ready to let him go. Just keep him close and treat him like the king he is!!

Many hugs to you for your huge heart. So many could learn from you. :-)

Sun, 2011-05-29 21:29 — [cats of wildcat... \(not verified\)](#) [20]

Bob looks great and seems to [21]

Bob looks great and seems to be happy to be here with you. bless you for all the help you have given him!

Sun, 2011-05-29 22:16 — [Boo Biggins \(not verified\)](#) [22]

Lookin' Good [23]

You're rockin' it Bob. So proud of you. Soak up that sunshine buddy!

Mon, 2011-05-30 09:49 — [ZoeEmEffGee](#) [24]

yay Bob! [25]

Bob looks great!!! He seems really happy too - that's the most important thing. Keep hanging in there!

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