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## Bob's Battle with Lymphoma: Fade Away

Wed, 2011-03-16 11:39 — Robin Olson

With all the horror and tragedy going on in the world, I've found myself unable to write. I don't see the point in talking about my cat having cancer or my foster kittens having a cold. It just doesn't seem worthy of description when thousands of Japanese people, and their pets were washed away in a tsunami or crushed in the 9.0 earthquake last week and the ones who survived, 450,000 are in shelters without much more than the clothes on their back.

I also find myself not wanting to look at the situation with Bob. It's so sharply painful, that perhaps I'm looking for reasons not to think about it, not to write about it. This isn't a cheerful story. It's one of great heartbreak, but just for one person and that doesn't seem to matter compared to so many worse things going on.

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©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob last month.

Last month, Sam and I had to make a choice. Either stop the weekly chemo treatments Bob was getting because we can't afford it any more or find another solution. **It cost \$600 a WEEK and we'd have to do it for 27 weeks.** I haven't worked in a very long time. My finances are in the dumps. Bob was doing well on Elspar and Vincristine, but we asked Dr. I. if there were any other things we could do that would be as good, but not as costly. He suggested we could change Bob over to using [Mitoxantrone](#) (1). It would be every four weeks at \$400 or so. We could certainly make this happen. I felt such relief that the burden of the costs would be lifted and we could give Bob a fighting chance to live.

I asked everyone I could about whether or not we should stop a successful protocol that we cannot go back to if the other chemo doesn't work. We were told the new chemo was well tolerated and that they had seen very good results with it so we felt good about moving forward.

**So Bob had his first treatment about 5 weeks ago and the Vet now said it's \$600.00 and every THREE weeks instead of every FOUR.** The next morning after treatment, Bob's ears were filled with hot pink spots. He was itchy. He was eating, but not great. Dr. Larry thought it was the ringworm being ignited by the chemo. Dr. I. agreed. There was little to do other than to treat it topically.

It got worse. Slowly, at first, Bob's head lost fur. He looked terrible, but he still ate well and seemed perky. I still pushed the Vets about if it really was ringworm or a reaction to the chemo. No one could tell me other than if it was chemo it was a very rare reaction. That the fur would grow back after chemo-if we get that far.

Dr. Larry said that maybe a dermatologist would take Bob's case but with having FIV+, lymphoma, ringworm, etc., that it was unlikely there was much to be done. Then, he said if I was any other client, he would urge me to euthanize Bob to spare the other cats in the household from getting the ringworm. At the time I nodded, said I understood, but the more time has passed, the angrier I've become. I know what Bob is facing. I've had ringworm in the house for a year. He knows that. Most of the cats are fine, knock wood. MacGruber has a spot on his foot. That's it. It's a fungal infection. It sucks, but that's all it is.

Bob's losing his dignity, along with his fur, but he's still Bob. He was still eating and purring and hanging out with us. To even suggest I put him down...

He said we could give Bob a bath and it might help. At least he tried.

So we did.



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Bob either enjoyed the bath or was too tired to fight us. As I washed him, I started to see just how much fur he's losing...and he's losing it rapidly. His belly, which was shaved when he had surgery to remove 1/2 of his liver in December, had grown more bald. His head has comical spikes and clumps of fur, but he's mostly bald now. His paws have small spots of fur loss. It won't be much longer before Bob has no fur at all. His once beautiful orange fur, will be gone, maybe forever.



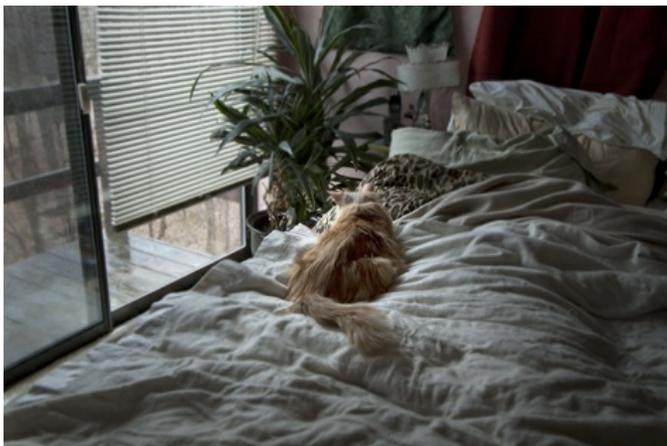
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I'm freaked out and don't know what to do or where to turn for help. I feel the Vets have washed their hands of this but maybe no one can help now? I'm not a Vet. I'm just someone who loves their cat and is trying to help him, but now it's hard for me to even look at Bob. When I pet him, I can feel every bump in his spine. **He's not eating well for us and he spends day and night in our bedroom**, on the bed, where we placed an electric blanket for him to snuggle on. He moves very slowly. Clearly something has happened and I'm not sure I can fix it. He's had the sniffles for a day or so and the other day he had "the runs." Maybe Bob's brewing a URI and that's the cause for some of his recent woes? Maybe I'm kidding myself? I can hear Dr. I's voice; *"It's probably a progression of the cancer."*



©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. *Bob, this morning, with MacGruber looking on.*

I'm sure the blanket is the big reason Bob doesn't hang out with us any more, but I can't help but feel a stab in my gut when I pass by the bed he usually sleeps on and see it empty. I know Bob is upstairs, but I know, too, that one day that bed will be empty and Bob will really be gone. He's leaving us already, gradually, but we can see the progression happening when we couldn't before. The day is coming. I am not ready. I never will be.



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#### **CICH Content Categories:**

[Bob Dole](#) <sup>[2]</sup>

[Disease](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

[Vets](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

[Who Approved That?](#) <sup>[5]</sup>

## **Comments**

Wed, 2011-03-16 11:57 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

### **BOB:** <sup>[6]</sup>

You and Bob have fought the good fight. It seems he is telling you that it's time...I KNOW how hard and gut-wrenching this is, but don't let your baby suffer anymore.

Part of being a responsible pet owner, is knowing when to let go. He will be waiting for you on the Rainbow Bridge.

You did all you could, be assured in that. You can't win this. :( I'm sorry.

Wed, 2011-03-16 12:01 — catbyte6 (not verified)

### **Oh Bob, we are so rooting for** <sup>[7]</sup>

Oh Bob, we are so rooting for you but we always have to make these horrible decisions and then live with them. I've done it too much and they haunt me still. Did I do the right thing, was it their time. My Vets are always so compassionate. I always ask what would they do and I've had a few of them cry with me.

The telling thing for me is when their bad days outnumber the good, then it is time. If they can't walk right or eat and just don't seem to be "there", it is time. You are never, ever ready for that day.

My thoughts and prayers are with you and Bob at this time. You are not alone in your grief as I am crying right along with you. PS-yes there is worldwide tragedy but this is your tragedy and is just as important. Don't think for a minute that it isn't.

Wed, 2011-03-16 12:18 — J Jolton (not verified)

### **Bob** <sup>[8]</sup>

I know how hard it is. I watched Brubeck slowly progress from an energetic and playful to slow, uncomfortable, and painful. As much as it hurts to make the call to euthanize, the simple fact remains that Reality comes along, taps you on the shoulder, and tells you to do what you know is right, regardless of how you feel. My father had to make that call for my mother, and while he asked my brothers and me to be a part of that process, in the end it lay with him and it was the hardest, most heartbreaking, and painful decision he ever made and will ever make. But it was the right thing to do, never mind how we felt. We did what was best for her, I did what was best for Brubeck, and I know you will do what's best for Bob.

My thoughts are with you.

J

Wed, 2011-03-16 14:39 — Wendy (not verified)

## **I agree totally with your** [9]

I agree totally with your suggestion..Please don't put that poor kitty through this. Please do what is right for your kitty. I am so sorry, I am crying too. Take care, and do what is right.

Wed, 2011-03-16 12:30 — [danceswithcats](#) [10]

**\*hug\*** [11]

Robin, I'm crying with you as I read this. Yes, the tragedy in Japan is huge and overwhelming, but you deserve love and support for your own personal tragedy, too.

I'm finding that the Heart Sutra and the great bright mantra at the end helps me to cope with my own grief ... even though I still do my share of crying.

"... Therefore, know that the Prajna-Paramita is the great bright mantra, the great transcendent mantra that relieves all suffering. Know this as truth and declare:

*Gaté, gaté, paragaté, parasámgate, bodhi svaha.*  
(Gone, Gone, Gone Beyond, Gone Far Beyond, Be Set Upon Awakening!)"

Wed, 2011-03-16 12:39 — [Robin Olson](#) [12]

## **Thank you for the reminder.** [13]

I should know that, myself, but I've been out of touch with my Sangha for a long time now.

Wed, 2011-03-16 14:38 — [danceswithcats](#) [10]

## **We wouldn't be human...** [14]

...if we didn't need a reminder sometimes. Even if we were truly elevated and enlightened beings, I can't imagine it wouldn't hurt to lose a beloved friend. And maybe I'm still at the very beginning of my own process, but opening my heart to give compassion and loving kindness, I also open my heart to grief and sorrow. I do it anyway, because I can't do otherwise, and continue to work, little by little, toward enlightenment.

\*hug\* again

I offer a special merit for you and for Bob.

Wed, 2011-03-16 13:01 — Christina (not verified)

**Bob** [15]

Sorry is inadequate a word. I feel your pain.  
The Association of Pet Loss and Bereavement might offer some comfort ([www.aplb.org](http://www.aplb.org)) [16]  
Prayers for Bob and your family.

Wed, 2011-03-16 13:38 — [littlesmom](#) [17]

**Bob** [18]

Bob is still a beautiful cat, even without some of his fur. I don't envy your position. But Bob will be waiting for you over the Rainbow Bridge. God Bless you and the Clutter.

Wed, 2011-03-16 14:12 — Catnynouse (not verified)

## **Yes, there is much sadness** [19]

Yes, there is much sadness going on in the world, but Bob and the other kittys ARE your world and that is very real and something you must deal with every day so you have no reason to apologize for sharing updates on any of them. The people who follow your posts every day want to know how things are going so please don't ever think "we" don't want to hear about them.

It is very sad to know what's happening and the only thing I keep hearing in my head is that Bob will let you know when he's ready or feels it's time to let go. I know that's true sadness and something you don't want to think about, but please know you're in our thoughts & prayers and will "listen" whenever you need to vent.

Take care & give them all hugs for us.

Wed, 2011-03-16 14:42 — [Janiss \(not verified\)](#) [20]

## **Robin, there really is** [21]

Robin, there really is nothing I can add to what you already know and feel. Just know that, even in the face of a major world disaster, there is still room in my heart - and the hearts of your friends - to keep you and Bob in our thoughts.

Wed, 2011-03-16 15:02 — [Jan Kozłowski \(not verified\)](#) [22]

### **Robin I'm so sorry...thoughts** [23]

Robin I'm so sorry...thoughts and prayers to you and your beloved boy Bob.

Wed, 2011-03-16 15:30 — db (not verified)

### **Bob** [24]

I'm sorry that you are having to deal with this right now. Bob will let you know when he's had enough - and because you love him, you will honor that and give him his wings. It's never easy and as I read about Bob I remember my boy, Jess, who left me a year ago this month when his heart stopped working (at a young 9 years old). I would have done anything in my power to heal him, but that wasn't to be.

There are tragedies all over the world, but that doesn't lessen the importance of the one you are facing.

Strength to do what you must, wisdom to know when, and comfort as you say good-bye to your special boy.

Wed, 2011-03-16 15:43 — [Marg \(not verified\)](#) [25]

### **BOB** [26]

That is the hardest decision any of us animal people have to make and I know you have heard this hundreds of times but you need to look into Bob's eyes and he will tell you when he is tired and ready to go. I had an older cat that would quit eating and I would get ready to take her in to send her to the bridge and darned if she didn't wake up eating like a horse. Then one day I looked at her and she looked really tired of fighting to stay alive. It will happen Robin.

Big hugs to you. You sure have given Bob every opportunity to keep on living.

Wed, 2011-03-16 16:02 — Debby (not verified)

### **Prayers for You** [27]

I have been there...when the chemotherapy doesn't work anymore, and your kitty is trying valiantly to be strong for your sake. As the others have said, you are never ready to make the call, and there's nothing you can do to make things any easier. Unfortunately, we must just go through this horrible time, as messy as it is, and take comfort in the love that we share with our cats. You will be in my thoughts and prayers.

P.S. I received a call this aft. that one of the cats we adopted out through our shelter needs to be returned. Both his owners have really horrible cancers and can no longer care for him. They need people to care for them now. The injustice that is cancer goes both ways.

Wed, 2011-03-16 17:06 — [Bernadette \(not verified\)](#) [28]

### **Bob** [29]

Robin, just being there is the hardest thing to do.

It's difficult when veterinarians don't seem to be forthcoming, which usually means they think it's time to stop treatment and just don't want to say.

If you look in your heart, you'll see where he is even if you don't want to see, and maybe find that what he'd really want you to do is just lie down next to him for a while every day.

My thoughts are with you. Just be with Bob.

Bernadette

Fri, 2011-03-18 12:38 — Niko (not verified)

### **Bernadette, I've found what** [30]

Bernadette, I've found what you said about vets to be very true. Usually the good ones will be upbeat if there's even a sliver of hope. When all hope is gone, that's when they'll say things like "no one would hold it against you" or "it would not be a bad idea", even to the more dire "your cat will not be leaving here" and finally the brutal truth at the end, "you need to get here ASAP".

Robin, I am so sad just thinking about the decision you have to make with Bob. But I would have to say, whenever I've had to say goodbye to my little ones, I could see in their eyes them asking for relief; to go with some dignity after all they've been through. My heart truly goes out to you.

Wed, 2011-03-16 17:43 — [isilwath](#) [31]

### **\*HUGS\*** [32]

There are no words.

I'm so sorry. :(

Wed, 2011-03-16 17:59 — Aimee (not verified)

### **I'm so sorry** [33]

Robin, no matter what goes on in the world, you and your family are important to me, to us, to your readers. NEVER feel you can't share what you want to/need to/have to. For myself.. if I didn't care.. I wouldn't read it.. I do care and I do read it and I wish I had a simple easy "make everything better" solution. Unfortunately I don't. I just know that you will listen to your heart and you'll listen to Bob. Karma has been in kidney failure two years now.. and at least three times in those last two years I was positive I would have to take him in. Then he would bounce back and start chasing his sisters again. So I know he's not ready. I have told him to tell me when it's time. He will. Make sure Bob knows that even though you don't want to tell him he has to leave.. that it's his decision and tell him he needs to tell you when it's time. It's the little twinge inside as you look into his eyes.. but I know it's a horrible choice, and you always wonder "what if". Know I think you are an amazing woman who is doing an incredible job.. that I love you as a dear friend even though we've never met. Sending you love and light and positive energy.. to you and Bob and Sam. ::Hugs::

Wed, 2011-03-16 20:14 — [acninee](#) [34]

### **What a lot of wisdom to have** [35]

What a lot of wisdom to have all on one page, Robin, so many and such wise loving friends.

I think the wisest is:

"just lie down next to him for a while every day"

Just cherish each day there is.

Wed, 2011-03-16 20:30 — [jansfunnyfarm \(not verified\)](#) [36]

### **Bop** [37]

We're sorry about your position because you are suffering along with Bob. It's so hard to watch a sick pet and wonder what is best for him. You're doing the best you can for him, one day at a time.

Wed, 2011-03-16 21:08 — [catsrthebest](#) (not verified)

### **Hugs Robin. I am so sorry.** [38]

Hugs Robin. I am so sorry. Bob knows how much you love him. Lay down next to him each day. No one can tell you what to do. I inherited a cat from my father and know there is a lot of emotion involved.

Listen to what Bob tells you and know we all care deeply about you

Wed, 2011-03-16 22:29 — [Ivy](#) (not verified)

### **Bob** [39]

Oh Robin, I can't stop crying. It just breaks my heart to read about Bob's current condition. My heart goes out to you and Bob. Like what others have said, you have fought with all your heart and strength. Bob knows how much you love him and that you have done EVERYTHING possible for him.

My thoughts and prayers are with you and Bob. Please give Bob my hugs and kisses. Big hugs to you too, Robin.

Thu, 2011-03-17 13:29 — [Meredith](#) (not verified)

### **I am so sorry for what you** [40]

I am so sorry for what you are going through. Sometimes we love them so much and don't want to let go. But you have to consider any pain or suffering he is going through and his quality of life. Plus always remember you gave 150% of yourself to trying to help him. He knows that and always will. I dread the day I will have to make a choice such as this with one of my babies. And can't say I would have the answers to my own questions in regards to what I should do. It's hard to let go of the ones we love. Just spend what time you have left together and know we are all thinking of you all and your in our prayers. God bless you for what you do to help these poor creatures!

Thu, 2011-03-17 21:03 — [Jane](#) (not verified)

### **Oh dear Robin! My heart is** [41]

Oh dear Robin! My heart is broken to hear Bob is not doing well!!! I can't stop crying! I can totally understand no matter which choice you make. My thoughts and prayers are with Bob, you and Sam!!!

Thu, 2011-03-17 22:37 — [Anne \(not verified\)](#) [42]

## **Where there's life, there's hope...** [43]

Robin,

Though Bob looks like hell right now (who wouldn't while going through chemo, and having ringworm?), you say that he still has a good quality of life, and that's all that matters. Who knows what the future holds? It's readily apparent that you have his best interest at heart, so take it one day at a time, and don't give up hope. My prayers are with you all at this trying time.

Be well... (((HUGS)))

CICH @ [Google+](#)  
Robin @ [Google+](#)

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