



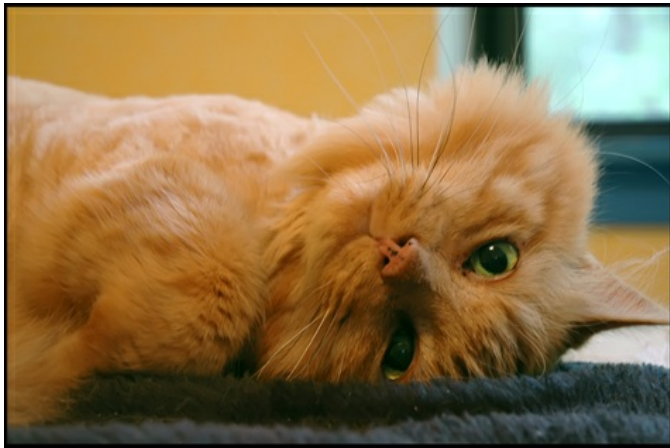
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Bob's Battle with Lymphoma: Letting Go. Part 1 of 5

Tue, 2011-09-06 16:11 — Robin Olson

As you may know, a few days ago, on September 3, 2011, my dear cat, Bob Dole passed away. This is the unvarnished record of the last days of Bob's life. It includes a description of Bob's last moments. While difficult to write, and to read, I felt it was my duty to close this chapter with a brave heart, not to whitewash it or make it more palatable. This is life and this is death.



©2006 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob comes to live with me in 2006.

Less than a month ago, I noticed Bob was getting dramatically thinner. We ended up taking him to the oncologist where they did \$1600.00 of tests and told us that Bob's hepatic cancer was back in what remained of his liver, that the small-t cell lymphoma was getting worse, that his pancreas was probably involved and that he was also diabetic with a blood glucose of 500-onset from steroids used to treat the cancer.

It was determined that chemo was not working any longer and that no further treatments were recommended. It was time to let Bob go. We could take him home and care for him or put him down. It was time.



©2007 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob and Nicky are fast friends.

I got sick to my stomach. My head ached. I cried when I looked at Bob. At first, we chose to euthanize him in a few days, but after spending time with Bob and having many conversations, we made a difficult choice-to provide him with palliative care--simply feed him, keep him clean and comfortable and let him go on his terms, at his time. We knew this would not be an easy road, but since Bob was diagnosed with cancer last December, it's been tough. Nothing new here. It was a crap shoot doing this. I risked Bob passing in a lot of pain. I risked that if we needed Dr. Larry, that we could not get him here because it would be late at night or a weekend---or during Hurricane Irene. Yet, we OWED it to Bob, to give him the dignity to live those last days on his terms, not on ours. It is part of nature for ALL of us to slowly fade away, from the moment we are born. To prematurely interrupt that process because we are afraid of seeing what will happen next, is not something I could accept

doing to Bob.



©2007 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob loved to straddle the top of my Mother's old recliner.

I began to pay even closer attention to Bob's every move. Was he eating? Sometimes, but not enough. I had to learn how to syringe feed him. This was very difficult-from an emotional standpoint. Here I was FORCING Bob to eat, when he clearly didn't love being fed this way. I had to struggle with him. It made a mess. When I prepared his food, it had to be in a slurry. Too thin and it would drip out of the bird feeder size syringes-too thick and it would be tough for him to swallow and he'd protest by lifting his paw to push me away. I wanted to make sure it wasn't too hot-or too cold. I added baby food to give him more potassium. I added a bit of tuna water or even blended raw chicken liver so it might taste better and so I could get more nutrition into him.



©2008 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob just plowed over any cat that might be in his path. Here Nora is getting squashed.

It was a struggle, not just with Bob, but with myself. I knew if I stopped feeding him, Bob would die. I knew if I kept going, was I just forcing Bob to live unnaturally? How could I live with myself if I just watched Bob starve to death? Yet, he was getting thinner and thinner no matter what I did. Every day I was shocked to my core at the sight of him. I couldn't believe he could get so thin. We were feeding him every 4 or 5 hours with small offerings between that. It was exhausting, but it had to be done.



©2008 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob, Spencer, Nicky, Gracie & Petunia (and me under the covers).

Then, I came to a painful realization. Bob had been getting very low carbohydrate food. It was to keep from giving the cancer something to thrive on, but what I didn't understand is that it was also probably keeping Bob from keeping any weight on his bones and it was keeping his blood sugar low-maybe too low! I was starving him and I didn't even know it. Did you know that there is some sort of regulation that PREVENTS pet food company's from listing carbohydrate values on their labels! You have to do math to figure it out. Why do they do this? To disguise the crap they put in food-you think you're buying high quality stuff, but if it's full of carbs, it's going to be BAD for your cat. Dry food is the worst-even high quality brands-it's VERY high in carbs and for a protein hungry, obligate CARNIVORE, it's not appropriate...but Bob DID need SOME carbs in his diet, so I got something else to feed him to see if that would help.



©2008 Robin A.F. Olson. Home from being hospitalized for two weeks in 2008, battling Pancreatitis, Bob finally has his moment in the sun.

Every day I asked myself; "Is it time? Is he telling me he's ready? Should I just put him down?"

...end of part one...

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Comments

Tue, 2011-09-06 16:31 — [The Florida Fur... \(not verified\)](#) ^[7]

Bob ^[8]

Reading this really brings us back to all of the things we did with Sniffie last year. Bob was a fighter and we're glad that you knew that and didn't give up on him. How fortunate that you got so much extra time with him. Mom says the days that she and Dad spent feeding Sniffie with the syringe were such a special bonding time for them. Even the paw thing that Bob did was just like Sniffie. We're purring and praying for healing for you. Bob will always be with you and was so lucky to have you to take care of him.

The Florida Furkids and Angel Sniffie

Tue, 2011-09-06 17:24 — □□□□□□□□ (not verified)

□ **am so sorry for your loss** ^[9]

□ am so sorry for your loss Robin!!! I did not know Bob's pass until today and it broke my heart! I know there is nothing I can say will make it feel better. Sweet Bob lives forever in your heart as well as in mine. Run free, sweet angel Bob!!! Hugs & prayers to you, Sam and furkids in this difficult time...

Jane

Tue, 2011-09-06 18:32 — [Abby \(not verified\)](#) ^[10]

Bob ^[11]

Robin

I don't often comment, but have started delurking more and more.

I have been following your travels with Bob for some time and I have to tell you I have been awed at how sweetly and valiantly you helped Bob in the his final months, weeks, days and hours. You let him on his own terms make those choices. AS much as

it is painful to let them go, you gave Bob the grace to go by his own measures.
Sending you healing prayers ...
Abby and Mom Debra

Tue, 2011-09-06 21:08 — [Lee County Clowder \(not verified\)](#) [12]

So Sorry for your loss [13]

SO sorry to hear that Bob Dole has gone to The Bridge. Sending comforting purrrrrrrr and gentle headbutttss to you all.
ppuurrrrrrrrr

Tue, 2011-09-06 22:17 — [Mr Puddy \(not verified\)](#) [14]

I'm so sorry for your loss, [15]

I'm so sorry for your loss, Mom Robin. This is painful even me and my mom. Especially that was my birthday. While I did celebrate. One of my friend lose his life ! Rest in peace Bob and I send a ton of healing purrs to comfort you, Mom Robin

And Totally do agree with you about pet food company ! Mom and Me don't understand too. Why they are doing these. carbohydrate is never good for cats. but they keep put on cat food. just because it's low cost but never take any responsible for bad cause ! By the time, the owner know, we cats already got sick.

Hugs to you , Mom Robin. I hope I could do in pawson
Luv
xoxo

Puddy and Mom Boom

Tue, 2011-09-06 23:03 — [Prancer Pie \(not verified\)](#) [16]

We just hopped ofur from [17]

We just hopped ofur from Cat-Goats-Quotes. So sorry to hear about Bob. Our purrs and purrayers go out to you. Bob Dole was obviously much loved. *nosetaps*

Tue, 2011-09-06 23:11 — [Catnymouse \(not verified\)](#)

So sorry... [18]

Robin, I saw the memorial page you had up over the weekend, and it was beautiful. I am so sorry you lost Bob. You gave him so much love and caring, and I'm glad you got the time with him that you did. Sending blessings and prayers your way ...
Dorothy

Wed, 2011-09-07 00:03 — ['Kaika \(not verified\)](#)

We are so sorry for the loss [19]

We are so sorry for the loss of your sweet Bob Dole. We send you headbumps, gentle purrs and comforting thoughts.

Run free at the Bridge, handsome Bob ...

Wed, 2011-09-07 05:13 — [Lizzie \(not verified\)](#) [20]

Bob's Dignity [21]

Robin, I think you did a wonderful thing, to allow Bob to die naturally, under your loving care and with his dignity. I know you made the hardest decision - to decide to euthanase a pet is hard, but I think it's braver to support that pet through the last weeks of their life and help them die with their dignity and your love.

I have always been impressed by how you treat your cats like people. Not everyone seems to see their pets in that way, but you obviously do.

I'm sure - certain - that somewhere in Cat Heaven, Bob Dole is watching and smiling on you. All that love and life doesn't just fizzle out - our pets, just like human people, go on somewhere, even though we don't see them any more. One day you will meet Bob again and he will come to greet you - I'm sure he'll thank you then, for the love, caring and kindness you gave him in his last weeks - and during his happy life.

Fri, 2011-09-09 14:30 — [Dionne Canter](#) [22]

Bob Dole [23]

Robin, I can't imagine what you have gone through, not only living this, but to then put it all on paper, pouring your heart and soul into this chronicle to share with others. I am so sorry for your loss of this beautiful creature, but please know he was loved to the end, and you let him go on HIS terms. Which is all that can be asked.

That said, I am going to struggle through this entire chronicle, in the hopes that it will give me strength to go through what will inevitably be a last tough road for my own Annie. As you may remember, she contracted toxo last fall, then suffered through three strokes between December and April. Right now she is maintaining, but I feel she is living on borrowed time. I am hoping her last months/weeks/days (dare I hope for years?) are on her terms and are filled with as much love and kindness I can give her. I almost decided to let her go after the last stroke, but she has shown more determination and will than I could have imagined, and I cannot, will not, end her life just to ease my own suffering over her plight. The ONLY reason I would do this would be if her next episode leaves her unable to move around on her own. Right now, she can barely walk due to loss of sight in one eye, and total lack of balance. She falls on her face frequently, and her gait is less than graceful, but she manages without help from me (she prefers to do it on her own no matter how many times she falls). Thank you for being my inspiration to make her last time here as loving as I can make it.

Your love and commitment show through in every word you write, and I know Bob is running free, healthy and floofy, smiling down on you. I haven't even started reading and I'm already in tears...

RIP Bob Dole

Thank you for all you do Robin (and Sam)

Dionne

Mon, 2011-09-12 14:05 — [Laura Potts \(not verified\)](#) [24]

Bob [25]

Wow. I am so sorry for your loss. Bob seems like such a great cat. You will be in my thoughts.

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

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