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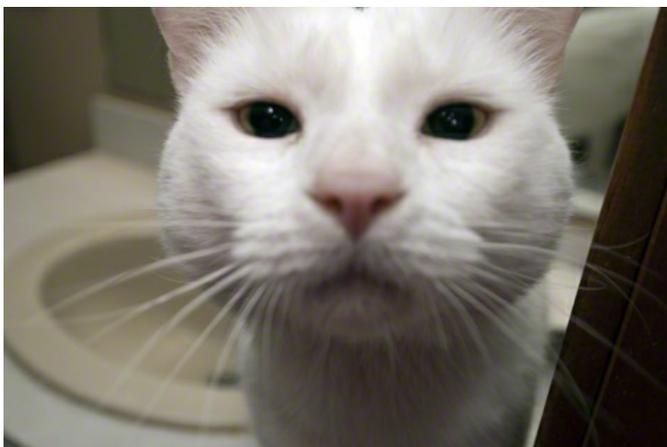
Calling All Angels for Jackson Galaxy (the cat)

Fri, 2012-09-28 12:44 — Robin Olson

Somewhere out there is a very special person who can accept the pain of loss as part of the cycle of life. Someone who doesn't run away from fear, but can sit with it, feel its vibration run through their veins and not fall apart. They may wince or shudder, but they can stay in place, take a breath and have faith that another breath will follow. That in this moment everything is okay—even if one day there will be moments of great sadness.

They realize that their experience on this mortal coil is not all about them, but about helping others and being present in the moment and cherishing every second of what remains.

This person could look at a situation like the one I'm facing with Jackson and accept that life with him will be bittersweet.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Jackson's ever the scamp with a big personality to match his big heart.

The test results are back. Jackson's thyroid function is normal. It takes off the table any hope that his heart problems stemmed from something else that we could control or even cure. It also doesn't resolve why he attacked my cats or why he still howls at night. His kidney function is slightly off—not a concern right now, but may be in the future. **Jackson has a worsening bacterial infection, possibly in his gut, but we're not sure. It will mean a longer course of antibiotics** as he only got Baytril for a week. It may be why I caught him peeing outside the box once or twice and explain why he's been fairly quiet the past few days.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Waiting for Dr. Larry.

The report from the cardiologist just came in. Jackson's heart is in bad shape. Dr. April describes his condition as "Severe, Advanced Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy."

The lasix, ACE inhibitors and aspirin (*a tiny amount every 3 days*) haven't caused any positive changes to his enlarged heart. It's only been 10 days, but **I was hoping to see more signs showing the medication was helping him—although he does seem to be more comfortable.** Dr. Larry feels that Jackson's always had a bad heart and that it didn't stem from a virus or other issue.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson.

The other thing Dr. Larry mentioned was how difficult it is to handle Jackson. When he's at the Vet, Jackson gets amped up. They can handle him for a few minutes but to do more than that jax begins to get nasty with the staff. His heart rate soars and his breathing becomes labored.

It's possible that just going to the Vet could push Jackson over the edge.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Taking a break at Dr. Larry's, but even with a hands off approach Jackson is still vexed.

That's why I chose to have extra blood tests done since we had the sample available. **I don't know when we'll be able to draw more blood. I don't know how we'll be able to repeat Jackson's echocardiogram in a safe way next month.**

We can't sedate Jackson, so how do we expose him to a long car ride AND an exam at the cardiologist?



©2012 Betsy Merchant. Jackson at the Kill Shelter.

I'm tempted to look at this situation and think that Jackson was meant to be with me. I saw his photo in a mass emailing, asking rescue groups to save this cat at a Kill shelter in Georgia. Something about him made me want to save his life. *Then cruel thoughts emerge—maybe he would have been better off if they euthanized him at the shelter?* **Was it worth all this stress**, transport to Connecticut, living in a shelter, being moved back and forth in cars because his previous adopters traveled a lot, then losing that home and coming to mine—only to have little time left to live?



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Home from the Vet, Jackson still prefers to hang out in the cat carrier.

I took a chance on rescuing an adult cat, but I never thought it would mean taking on one with a fatal heart condition.

If I hadn't been so diligent about finding out why his breathing looked odd to me, Jackson would probably be adopted with a ticking time bomb inside him that would destroy his unsuspecting family.

We know what ails Jackson, but we don't know if there's anyone who lives close by (*we can't transport him far ever again*) who would want to open their home to a cat who probably isn't going to live a very long time. **Dr. Larry said months, years if we're lucky.**

Truly only someone with the heart of a lion would adopt Jackson and I hope very sincerely they're reading this post. **Jackson deserves a home where he doesn't have to vie for attention as he has to do here. He'd be happy with a cat or two to make friends with, but that's a quiet place full of love and compassion.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. I don't know why Jackson prefers cardboard, even after I bought him a nice new cat bed, but he likes what he likes.

I turn my head and see Jackson curled up in a cardboard canned cat food tray that's on the floor. It's not fancy, but he likes it. He's resting quietly. All is well. I look at him and tears burn my eyes as I struggle not to cry. My life is about rescuing cats, about saving their lives and finding them wonderful families to share their life with. It's not supposed to be like this.

Jackson is supposed to get better. I want his story to have a happy ending, not a tragic one.

I wrote most of this post yesterday before Dr. Larry told me about the severity of Jackson's heart condition. After a brief discussion...

...it was clear to both Sam and myself that Jackson already found his angels-if I may be so bold to refer to ourselves like that. We've decided we're going to keep Jackson here where he'll become the face of Kitten Associates [1].

He shouldn't have to endure the stress of moving to another home and trying to adjust. **He has his home here with us. It's not perfect, but we do love him.** We'll keep him in our program because **we honestly can't afford to provide for another cat and had no plans to add to our family. We'll set up a special donation page for him and continue to update everyone on how he's doing since I know so many of you care about him and ask after him.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Jackson holding his catnip heart.

I had no idea that one day I'd say I was living with Jackson Galaxy, cherishing him and protecting him until his last day, but there you go. Life is full of irony and surprises.

I'm just trying to keep my chin up and be brave for Jackson and enjoy every moment we have together until there are no more.

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Comments

Fri, 2012-09-28 13:17 — [Random Felines \(not verified\)](#) [12]

Jackson [13]

I will keep all of you in my thoughts. But I KNOW he is in your life for a reason. He (and all animals) deserve better than a death in a shelter. No matter how much time he has here, he will spend it safe and loved.

Fri, 2012-09-28 13:32 — [Connie & The Crew \(not verified\)](#) [14]

heart of a lion.. [15]

heart of a lion..

Fri, 2012-09-28 13:39 — Laurie McRae (not verified)

You & Jackson Galaxy [16]

Robin,

You are truly an Angel on Earth! Because of your care & your compassion, no matter how long or short the remainder of Jackson Galaxy's life is, he will live every day with you knowing he is loved! I admire you more that words can express! Thank you & God bless you both!

Peace,

Laurie McRae & Panda >^..^<

Fri, 2012-09-28 14:07 — Roxan (not verified)

Jackson the Cat [17]

I'm so sorry to read about Jackson. My heart goes out to you and the decisions you face. I think if I was in your shoes I would look into home vet care and end of life comfort measures. And tap into your support system. Other cat loving friends. You will be in my thoughts and prayers as you journey on.

=^..^= RoXan

Fri, 2012-09-28 14:31 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

I'm not religious, but [18]

I'm not religious, but bless you. I've found myself casually reading your posts for quite some time, and when Jackson's news was announced, I realised that I was following his story much closer than I thought. I'm grateful to know that there are still people like you in the world. Seems like I'm always reading some awful cruelty story somewhere, and it breaks my heart. But then I think that there are people like you and me out there that love cats like family and are always fighting for them. Sometimes you don't choose your family. Sometimes things happen in life that we could have never expected. You tried, and it wasn't in vain. In the end, Jackson will pass in a warm, loving home. Not in a cold shelter alone, not on the street. It's because of you and all of your love and compassion that his life will end comfortably, and there is literally nothing more you could do for a creature than that. I truly believe that if he could, he would thank you.

Fri, 2012-09-28 23:17 — sflacatmom (not verified)

couldn't have said it better [19]

Thank you. What you wrote brought me to tears because it was exactly what I was thinking.

Jackson is not going to pass at the hands of someone unfamiliar and possibly uncaring, in an institutional environment w/no one to care that he's gone. **GOD WILL BLESS YOU** for taking Jackson in, caring for him as you have, and keeping him unconditionally.

"The king will answer them, 'I can guarantee this truth: Whatever you did for one of my brothers or sisters, no matter how unimportant [they seemed], **you did for me.**" Matthew 25:40

Fri, 2012-09-28 14:57 — Phil Velasquez (not verified)

Jackson [20]

I hope Jackson has many years with you guys, he really has a forever home with you. Paws and prayers.

Phil V

Fri, 2012-09-28 16:10 — jmuwj (not verified)

Having been down this road [21]

Having been down this road more than once, I empathize so very much, and thank you for your decision to keep the big guy with you, where he obviously belongs. (^ ^) and (O)

Fri, 2012-09-28 18:38 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

Jackson with cardiomyopathy [22]

I work at a veterinary hospital and over the 11 years I've been there, we have seen a number of cats like Jackson. As you know, cardiomyopathy is a terminal disease -- he may have been born with a defective heart or it may have been damaged by a disease he picked up as a feral kitten. We have seen some improvement with the use of Enalapril, and in some cases, with Azithromycin. Thank you for taking him on and making his life happy for as long as it lasts.

Fri, 2012-09-28 18:44 — Lisa McDowell (not verified)

I am glad he is staying ^[23]

As I read your post I worried about any other changes this sweet boy might have to endure to find a forever home and what that would do for his fragile heart. So I am glad to hear he is in his forever home now with you. I know that wasn't your plan. However long he is with you, his life will not be tragic. Had you not rescued him, that would have been tragic. He will know love and care and good food and safety and nice cardboard boxes to sleep in. Maybe because of him, other people will reconsider adopting a cat with special needs and give them a second chance at a good life.

Fri, 2012-09-28 19:37 — Linda Hickam (not verified)

Vetmedin for Jackson ^[24]

Please try that for him, it gave our Mango amazing results when he was on deaths' door with the same problem 6 more GREAT months. Jackson looks like a white Mango...

Fri, 2012-09-28 20:36 — [purpie](#) ^[25]

My heart goes out to you ^[26]

I know it's going to be hard but I'm glad to hear you are going to keep him with you. I wish I were close so we could help each other.

I've been crying all day because I think my oldest cat, A Tuxie named Meow, is dying. He's deaf now and been getting skinnier by the day. But up until today he's been a good eater, cleaning the bowls of any other cat that doesn't finish. At night he likes to sleep on my chest but this morning, after I fell back asleep, he got down and cralled behind the bed. We got him out to offer him breakfast and he didn't eat. Instead he went back behind the bed and spent the day there. Finally around 5:30 he came out and drank a lot of water. Now he's sleeping on the cool wood floor.

I realize I'm going to be hated for not taking him to the vet. We have no money, not even for food. Thanks to gifts from friends I've been able to feed the cats and my husband and I are living on rice and beans. So please understand that I love my cat very much. I just don't have the money to take him to be killed (nor do I want to!)

Fri, 2012-09-28 20:49 — dino (not verified)

Natural/alternative remedies ^[27]

Have you tried COQ 10 or some herbs like Hawthorne (crataegus) which are for the heart ?

<http://www.cat-health-guide.org/felineheartproblems.html> ^[28]

Fri, 2012-09-28 20:55 — MK (not verified)

Yes, there are people out ^[29]

Yes, there are people out there that will adopt and love a cat, even if they have little time left on this earth. Like I wrote in the last post..I did it. I was told the kitten was going to live maybe 2 years. I wanted him to have a nice home where he would be loved. Well, something happened and now his heart is fine...so he will probably be with me for 20 years! He is a pain in the butt, but I dont regret adopting him. He was meant to be with me..just like Jackson is meant to be with you.

Fri, 2012-09-28 21:00 — Dee (not verified)

Jackson ^[30]

I am sorry that Jackson and you are going through this. Unfortunately Iam all too famiia with this condition.

Over the past 20 years I have personally rtrapped, rescued, had vaccinated and neutered over 80 cats. At one time, our sanctuary was caring for a high of 60 cats! Unfortunately, it is too expensive/difficult to become a non-profit in my state so all of this has come out of my pocket. We are currently caring for 40 cats.

This condition has arisen several times and it's always a shock. An apparently healthy cat suddenly is at death's door. One vet explained it to me as cats will compensate for their hearts as long as possible and when the symptoms are finally noticeable, the condition is very advanced. I am sorry to say that even with the very best of vet care, they do not tend to last very long after the diagnosis has been made. Nutritional therapy and alternative medicine can sometimes add a LITTLE time, but not much.

In jackson's defense - weakness is a huge handicap in the wild and many cats will instinctively lash out in a deliberate effort to

avoid the perception of weakness by the other cats.

Treasure your time together and do what you can but my advice would benot to go with extreme invasive measures as they really do not seem to help. Jackson has our purrs and prayers.

Fri, 2012-09-28 21:02 — Dee (not verified)

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Fri, 2012-09-28 21:41 — thecatguy (not verified) ^[32]

That is bittersweet news ^[33]

That is bittersweet news indeed. I'm glad he has won over your heart and you will keep him. He's very lucky to have you. I also wondered if having a in home vet might be a good option for drawing blood and the like. I'll be praying for you and Jackson.

Sat, 2012-09-29 16:22 — artemis133 (not verified)

Love to Jackson ^[34]

Bless you for taking care of Jackson. Poor guy, he looks like a sweetie. One of my cats, Cookie, died of congestive heart failure, and as you say, it was so far advanced by the time it was diagnosed, it was too late to really do anything for it other than love her and make her comfortable, and say goodbye when the time came for her to go to the Rainbow Bridge. I miss her terribly to this day-she was such a sweet cat.

Sun, 2012-09-30 21:17 — Mrs. Handyverger (not verified)

Aw, Jackson ^[35]

I agree with the above poster who said that even if the rest of Jackson's life is not long, he will spend it in a warm place where he is loved. He looks just like my Lancelot, who my husband and I adopted after losing our tuxedo boy, Pippin, earlier in the year (to a very sudden and unexplained kidney failure on top of diabetes). We have found out that Lancelot, who's 1, has seizures. When we found ourselves asking "Why us? Why is it our cats that get sick, when we give them such good care and love them so much?" ... well, I'm not religious, but something my mother said to me hit home: Because God sends them to the right place, where they'll be loved and cared for, no matter what.

I don't even know Jackson, and I'm bawling my eyes out for him and for you. I hope that you continue to have many days left with him.

Mon, 2012-10-01 00:07 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

Jackson ^[36]

You are such an angel to rescue Jackson and keep him with you! It is so heartbreaking that he has this disease, but so wonderful that he feels so loved with you and that you are taking such good care of him.

Love & prayers for you & Jackson:-)

Love & hugs,

Lois

Mon, 2012-10-08 11:51 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

Jackson ^[37]

We had to put our dog down last Saturday nite. Congestive heart failure and her labored breathing was more than we, or she, could take. I pray that you will consider this an option for Jackson, I know this is a hard thing to do but he is just a miserable feller and I can't handle this stuff. Don't let Jackson reach that point. Love, Dave.

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

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