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## Jackson's Broken Heart

Fri, 2012-09-14 13:18 — Robin Olson

*Perhaps it's fitting that as I write this my chest feels tight and my sinuses are plugged up. My sole goal for today is to write this update then finally go to bed and rest. With all the effort surrounding Jackson and his care, I couldn't let a cold stand in my way, but I realize I've been flirting with getting pneumonia (again) and if I'm sick I can't care for him.*

### Jackson. How's he doing?

Jackson responded to the lasix and ACE inhibitor treatment over the course of Wednesday evening. First, the crackling lung sounds subsided, then were gone. **The fluid build up in his lungs was resolved.** This was a great sign.



©2012 Robin A.F Olson. Waiting.

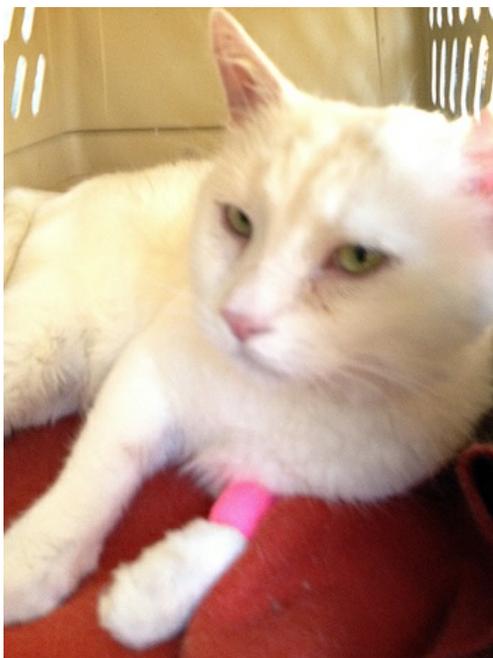
**Jackson's respiration was still too fast, but slower than it was when we first brought him in.** This told us the lasix was working to remove the fluid around his heart that was making him feel so uncomfortable in the first place.



©2012 Robin A.F Olson. Here's Jackson! At last!

**By Thursday morning, Jackson was off oxygen and in a "regular" cage.** After retesting his blood pressure and respiration, the Vets, including a cardiologist and critical care specialist, felt that Jackson was getting close to being stable enough to go home. **On Jackson's chart was a warning note-that he was fractious and for the staff to handle him**

with caution. Perhaps it was the treatment or simply feeling better but Jackson stopped being aggressive and the staff found he was a joy to be with.



©2012 Robin A.F Olson. With boo-boo bandage still intact, Jackson finally heads home.

They also asked me what Jackson was being fed and I told them not to feed him dry food, at least. **They gave him canned Friskies, which they knew I'd not be thrilled about, but Jackson ate it right up**, the final clinical sign that told the Vets he was ready to go home.

Yesterday afternoon Sam and I drove to [VCA Shoreline Veterinary Referral & Emergency Center](#) <sup>[1]</sup>. **We knew we weren't going to pick up a cat who was cured of his illness, but at least we were going to pick up a living cat.** Jackson had begun a transformation, but I didn't know how he would be different; would he have more energy? be cranky? be difficult to pill?



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The other big question was; **NOW WHAT?** What would become of Jackson?

**The brutal blow about all of this was the news I'd been keeping secret. Jackson was about to be adopted.**

A great family met Jackson a few days before and had decided that he was the one for them. **I couldn't ask anyone to take on the care of a cat with a terminal disease. It was too much to hope for that they'd still want to bring him home after I told them the sad news.**

**In a way, the possible adoption saved Jackson's life** -that and the sad fact that my dear cat, Stanley died of HCM <sup>[2]</sup> when it was too late to do anything to help him. Stanley's respiration mimicked Jackson's and for that reason I felt that I wanted to get Jackson checked out one more time before he got adopted. **I had a feeling something was off with Jax and at least, even with the costs and fear for his future, it was worth it.** Maybe we caught it in time to still give him a good quality of life?

We spoke with Jackson's Vet and she went over the many details about his care going forward. **First, Jackson must be medicated with 2 TINY pills, 2 times per day. He's also on a short course of Baytril since he did show signs of having some sort of infection/upper respiratory issues. Jackson will also be on a small dose of aspirin every 3 days.** This is to prevent his blood from clotting. Cats with HCM can "throw a clot" which often causes their back legs to become immobilized. It also can cause death.



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**In addition to medications, Jackson will need MORE tests done. Doing a FreeT4 blood test [3] is important because heart problems can be brought on by hyperthyroidism [4] so that needs to be ruled out. Jax will also need another echocardiogram in 2 to 3 months and followup blood work to check his kidney function.** The problem with HCM, in addition to the obvious, is that the extra fluids we need to keep off Jackson's heart put a strain on the kidneys. If Jackson has renal disease, it's game over.

**It's too early to say what Jackson's future holds. There's more to be done to find out the root cause of his heart ailments.**

We have to wait and see how he'll respond to the drug therapy over time. We couldn't even discuss if he has years or months. We thought Jackson was two, but turns out he's closer to five years old. **He's still a young cat, so perhaps he'll be with us for a long time to come.**

Last night we got Jackson home and he hit the litter pan and had what must have been a very satisfying pee. He wanted to be fed but only nibbled on his food. **He spent an hour on the bed but most of the night inside the cat carrier we used to bring him to the Vet. This morning he didn't want to eat, but I managed to get him pillled.**

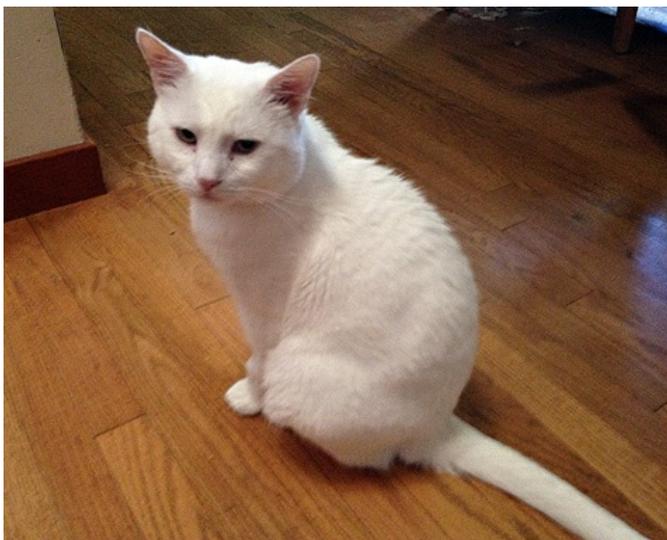


©2012 Robin A.F Olson. At home on the bed with Spencer.

This morning, as I started to put a game plan together of what to try to tempt Jackson with, he started to meow. **He came over to me and rubbed up against my legs. I asked him if he was hungry and he meowed in reply.** I grabbed some cat food, warmed it up and offered it to him. **Sam and I had to stand as sentries to keep the other cats away since they were still waiting for their breakfast to thaw out while Jackson finally ate.**

**It was a marvelous sight.**

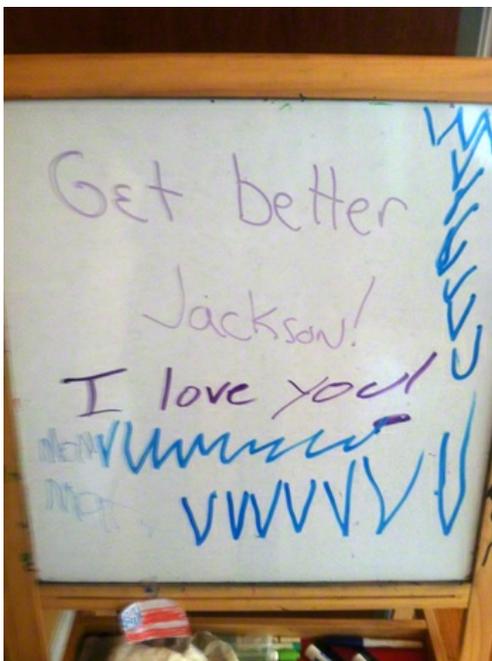
Though he didn't eat well, he DID eat, then wanted a bit more a bit later.



©2012 Robin A.F Olson. This morning.

**I find myself watching Jackson's chest rise and fall, trying to be prepared at any moment to run him to the Vet.** His breathing is more fluid, smoother, slower and more normal, but it's tough not to feel panic. We have to stay watchful, but we have to give it time so we can all adjust.

Jackson just cried just now. I went upstairs to check on him. **He got out of his cat carrier and came over to me. He purred as I petted him. I lowered my head down to his and he rubbed his forehead against mine. Maybe he was telling me "thank you for saving my life" or maybe he was just feeling a bit lonely. Whatever the reason, I was glad to see this sign of him feeling better. He really IS a good boy.**



A sweet note from some of Jackson's fans.

**It's time for me to go back to bed and finally get some rest. Jackson needs it, too. It's been a tough few days on all of us, but this reminds me never to take even a single day for granted. You really don't know what tomorrow will bring.**

If you'd like to join the MANY WONDERFUL PEOPLE who have donated towards Jackson's growing Vet bill, please visit this [link on ChipIn](#) <sup>[5]</sup> to donate. THANK YOU!

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[Who Knew?](#) <sup>[14]</sup>

[Sam](#) <sup>[15]</sup>

## Comments

Fri, 2012-09-14 13:38 — Maijken (Max's ... (not verified)

### **Glad for some good news** <sup>[16]</sup>

This was so nice to read. I am glad he's doing better, and his HCM was caught in time! Every time I see his sweet face, I just smile. He sure is precious. I will continue to follow his story. Keep us posted! And you get some rest, too!!

Fri, 2012-09-14 13:40 — Lorraine S. (not verified)

### **Glad Jackson's back home...** <sup>[17]</sup>

I hope he keeps improving and feels better soon. He's fortunate to have you and Sam as pet parents--he's in loving and capable hands!!!

Fri, 2012-09-14 14:30 — [Marilia \(not verified\)](#) <sup>[18]</sup>

### **Purrrrs** <sup>[19]</sup>

Take care, rest and I'm sending purrrrrrs to you!!!!

Fri, 2012-09-14 15:20 — Phil Velasquez (not verified)

### **Jackson** <sup>[20]</sup>

He is a beautiful boy :) Thank you for loving and taking care of him.

Phil

Fri, 2012-09-14 15:32 — [Lizzie \(not verified\)](#) <sup>[21]</sup>

### **Glad of the Better News!** <sup>[22]</sup>

So glad he's pulled through and that the news is better.

I hope Jackson continues to improve and becomes fit again very soon.

Robin, you could try an "Adopt a Cat" for Jackson - like they do in the zoos & wildlife parks - where someone makes a small, regular contribution toward his care / meds etc and gets updates on his life - like a few e-mails and photos now and then etc. If several people subscribed, it could make a big difference to your budget for him!

Good luck to Jackson - and you. Hope your cold goes quickly and you also feel better soon. XX

Fri, 2012-09-14 21:47 — Lynne Allison (not verified)

### **Jackson** <sup>[23]</sup>

Thank you, Robin, for going the extra mile (and then some!) for beautiful Jackson! As the wife of a vet I know that many people wouldn't or couldn't have done so much. You and Jackson continue to be in my prayers...and whatever happens, however long Jackson has here on earth, it's good to know he'll have so much love and care, the best possible quality of life for this sweet kitty.

Fri, 2012-09-14 23:17 — Christy (not verified)

### **Jackson and HCM** <sup>[24]</sup>

Hi Robin: my heart goes out to you, as I just lost my wonderful cat Yoshi to HCM and cancer.

It was horrible trying to figure out what to do and I had tears streaming down my face every time I talked to the vet.

Get rest, and if Jackson keeps eating he is likely getting better.

Hugs, christy

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**Source URL (modified on 2012-09-14 13:18):** <https://coveredincathair.com/content/jacksons-broken-heart?page=8>

#### **Links**

- [1] <http://www.vcaspecialtyvets.com/shoreline>
- [2] <http://www.coveredincathair.com/content/memory>
- [3] <http://animalendocrine.blogspot.com/2010/05/what-is-t4-how-is-t4-test-used-to.html>
- [4] <http://www.vet.cornell.edu/fhc/brochures/hyperthyroid.html>
- [5] <http://kittenassociates.chipin.com/jackson>
- [6] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/33>
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