



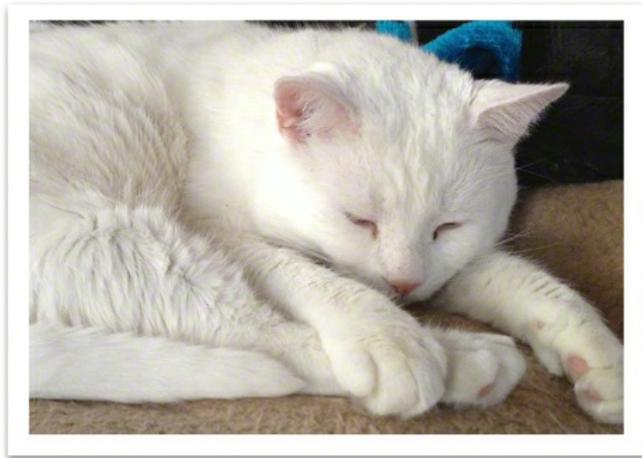
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Missing You.

Fri, 2013-02-15 11:59 — Robin Olson

I've often written about the challenges I've faced letting go of a foster cat. My "go to" answer when someone asks me how I can bear the pain of saying goodbye is; *"I'd rather cry because they left me and went to a good home than they died alone at a Kill shelter or on the streets, afraid and unloved."*



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Jackson napping, as always.

Since I've fostered hundreds of cats over the years, I've grown a little callus on my heart. Perhaps it helps me not "lose it" in front of adopters and be able to let go of all the wonderful cats when the time comes.

I don't always cry when my fosters leave. Sometimes I find that I'm even happy about it. **But Jackson was another story all together and frankly it's taken almost the three weeks since he left to feel okay about him being gone.**

Neither Sam nor I had any idea just how much we loved Jackson until it was time to put him into the cat carrier and tuck him into his new family's car. I looked at Jackson one last time. He looked straight ahead, out through the windshield. His eyes were bright with excitement and perhaps some concern. I whispered; *"I love you"* one last time and shut the door to the car. I wished everyone a safe trip—a 5 hour trip to northern Vermont where Jackson would be "retiring."



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson.

I tried to smile and wave goodbye, but the corners of my mouth weakened into a painful grimace. I turned quickly and walked into the house and immediately burst into racking sobs.

Sam held me as I said I wished Jackson didn't have to go and that I wanted to run outside and tell them to bring him back. I

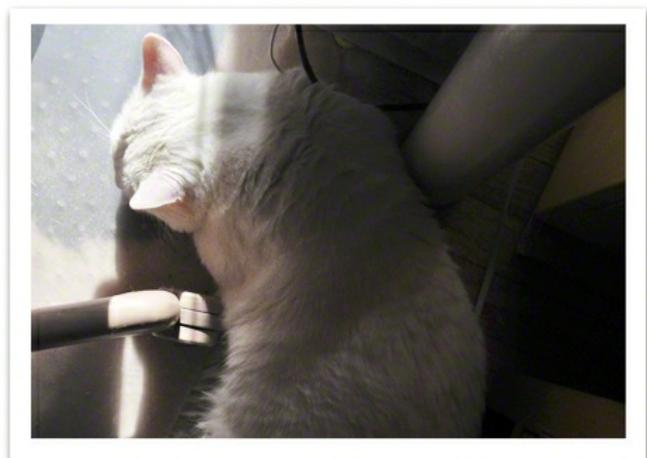
knew Sam wasn't always Jackson's biggest fan since Jackson would charge Sam's "baby" Nicky, causing Nicky to pee outside of the litter pan. Yet here Sam was with tears rolling down his cheeks, too. **Sam has NEVER cried when a cat left us and here he was nodding in agreement. He wanted Jackson back, too. I stopped sobbing and shrieked; "Why didn't you tell me that before? We could have kept him!"**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Morning pills. (the brown lumps in the Flavor Doh)

Who knew that this demanding cat had left such an impact on our hearts? Jackson woke me up EVERY morning by meowing loudly. Some mornings it was REALLY early. I had to get up or he'd cause a ruckus with the other cats. I tried to ignore him for days on end but every day the result was so bad that I'd rather just get up, get him his morning pills and start the day.

Jackson would yowl the second we turned out the lights to go to bed. I wouldn't get up because I didn't want to train him that I'd give him attention if he cried. I tried giving him a late night snack before bed but it didn't seem to help.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Dangerously close to my office chair, Jackson just wanted to be near me.

Every morning while I was trying to work, Jackson would sit next to my chair and rub me and cry until I gave him some attention-which I always did. **Thing is, he would also upset some of the other cats and want to take their place on the cat beds in my office or he'd start bugging me every two seconds.** I realized I needed to play with him so I started doing play sessions in the morning before I got to work.

Jackson was a riot chasing his favorite little pom poms across the floor. He also loved da Bird, but after he jumped up to catch it I stopped playing with it. I was too worried that I'd give Jackson a heart attack.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. The boy with his sparkle pom pom.

Jackson was almost constantly meowing and almost constantly hungry. He gained five pounds in the year he was with us. Being a BIG cat he could be that size, but in truth the snacks had to be cut back some for his heart's sake.

As much as I encouraged him, Jackson never sat on my lap and rarely sat on the sofa next to me. I believe someone trained him not to get on the furniture so he would always be in the room, but never close enough to be a lap cat. **He also tried to sleep on the bed with us, but that didn't go over well with the other cats so he stayed downstairs until morning.** It wasn't fair that he had to struggle to fit in.

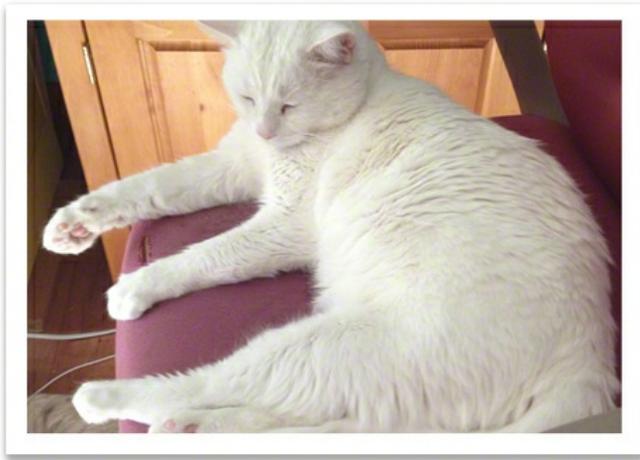
I can think back about how annoying Jackson could be, but it didn't matter. It didn't matter to Sam, either. Jackson has an amazing charisma that reminded me of my dearly departed cat, Bob. With Jackson gone, the house feels EMPTY and there are 15 cats here.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. I bought Jackson a fancy cat bed, but he preferred sleeping in a cardboard cat food tray.

It's quiet with Jackson gone. Nicky rarely pees outside the box. The spraying is almost non-existent. **It's better for the cats that Jackson is not here, but it's not better for me.** I loved that damn cat and the stress of the first week of being separated from him was brutal.

I was really worried Jackson wouldn't make the trip to Vermont alive, but he did. Once he was in his new home, some of the pipes burst and his family was up most of the night getting it fixed. Jackson didn't get his medication that night and was off his medications and off his food for about three days after that. I tried not to be a pest, but I was frequently emailing Mickey, his new mom, and trying to get her to let us come get Jackson if he wasn't eating or getting his much needed medication.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. At home on my office chair.

Jackson could die if he's off his meds for a long time and I wasn't about to let that happen. Sam and I started to plan a trip to Vermont, at least mentally prepare, but Mickey's emails assured us Jackson was slowly acclimating and starting to eat and take his pills.

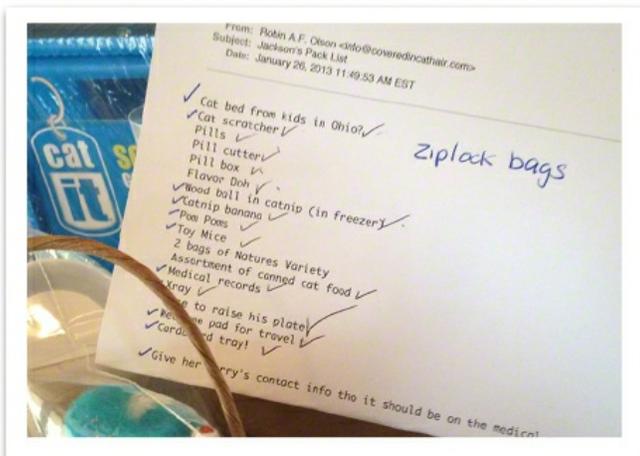
I backed off and hoped for the best. I wanted to beat myself up about letting Jackson go. After all I'd made a commitment to him and now he's living somewhere else. **In my heart he belonged to me. I slayed dragons for this cat, but I realized as with every foster cat; what is best for them is most important.**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. The last photo I took of Jackson, napping on a heated cat bed.

It was best for Jackson to have loads of attention and less stress and that's the home I found for him.

I've gotten some updates about Jackson from Mickey. She writes and tells me that Jackson no longer hides, but spends his day with her beau, Offie. Offie has become quite fond of Jackson and the two enjoy each other's company.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Normally we don't send our foster cats to their new home with so much stuff, but Jackson was an exception.

A favorite pastime is watching movies together. Jackson has a special cat bed that matches his fur so he's almost invisible as he snuggles in it while his mom and dad watch a movie. **Jackson's been given special places in the house with soft bedding and a special place to eat.** Jax met some of the couple's friends and I've heard he's always talking to Mickey, telling her about his day.

I asked Mickey if this was a love connection and she wrote back and said most definitely yes. The three of them are a family and have bonded and found joy in spending their days together.



©2013 Offie. Jackson doing well in his new home in Vermont.

Though I'm truly happy for Jackson and his new family, I will always miss that big lug, those big cheeks, getting a headbutt in the morning. His story could have ended a year ago at the sting of a needle in Georgia at a shelter that didn't have room for him, but he was lucky. **I saw in those pale green eyes a long lost friend who needed to come home. I'm just sad that the home wasn't meant to be mine.**



A Valentine's Day card from Jackson...the last words cut off "will you be mine?"

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Comments

Fri, 2013-02-15 13:11 — [Marilia \(not verified\)](#) ^[8]

Sweet ^[9]

I'm crying!

Fri, 2013-02-15 13:38 — [Catnonymouse \(not verified\)](#)

beautiful white kitties ^[10]

I had a large white kitty like Jackson, along with the heart problems. She died just over 2 yrs ago. Still miss her. She had quite the set of lungs, too... Same eye color. Wonder if they were from the same family line, distantly related!

Fri, 2013-02-15 16:04 — jmuhj (not verified)

RE: JACKSON ^[11]

I know just how it can be. Loving all cats and having had to rehome some in the past, I can relate to the gut-wrenchingness of it all. And some cats, big or not, just loom large(r) in our homes, hearts, and heads. There have definitely been some like that in my life. Quite a few, in fact. On the bright side, as you say, it's wonderful that Jackson is settling in and adored in his new home. And that he is in contact.

Fri, 2013-02-15 19:01 — Maria Romano (not verified)

Jackson ^[12]

Great story. But I can certainly understand your ambivalence in letting go of Jackson. It takes a strong person to let a foster cat go to forever home. You did the right thing for Jackson. From the pics I can see he is one terrific cat.

Mon, 2013-02-18 16:51 — Debbie (not verified)

Jackson ^[13]

You are a beautiful kind person = ^ ^ = <3

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