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The Silver Lining and the Black Clouds part two

Mon, 2012-07-30 16:40 — Robin Olson

German Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche said; ***“That which does not kill us makes us stronger.”*** After enduring the past four days I would add; ***“That which does not kill us, makes us eat a bag of Lays Wavy Potato Chips ^[1] and a container of French Onion dip—and feel no guilt in doing so.”***



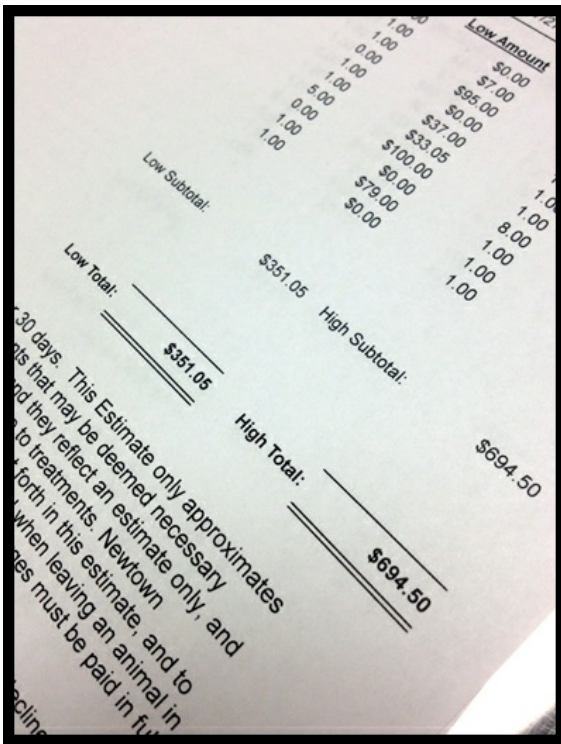
©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. You can tell from Nicky's posture that he doesn't feel well.

Nicky was the camel and white colored canary in the coal mine. It started on Friday. Nicky wasn't “right.” He wouldn't eat and he vomited. As I was about to brush my teeth, I heard the sound of water running. **I turned to see Nicky urinating on the floor a few feet away from me.** A few hours later, he walked over to the base of a cat tree and began to urinate on it-not even stopping as I started to scream, unable to reach him through the jungle of furniture blocking my way. **I was jumping up and down like a two year old having a tantrum.** I had no effect on his eliminating. He just kept peeing. There was no way to get to him from where I was standing so all I could do was watch him ruin something else.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. With Dr. C and Super-Deb.

Nicky has Chronic Renal Failure ^[2] and has been known to get urinary tract infections (as I wrote about HERE ^[3]). Clearly something was **WRONG**. Dr. Larry was out of town until Monday so I made an appointment to bring him in then. **I HATE it when Dr. Larry goes away because we often seem to have an emergency when he's not available.** As the day wore on, Nicky grew weaker. I took his temperature. It was **103.2°F**. He had a fever. We couldn't wait until Monday.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Fun at the Emergency Vet...and this was the cost to basically have them hook up the IV to Nicky's catheter (which was in place already) and giving him a place to lay in over night.

Dr. C examined Nicky and took his temperature again. It was over 104°F. They took some blood and did an in-house test. **The good news was that basically the values did not indicate something terrible was going on-like kidney failure or high white blood count, which would show he had an infection.** The bad news was that we didn't know what was going on but with a fever on the rise we agreed he should be on an IV. The Vet closed in two hours so they could get him started, but **we'd have to move him to the Emergency Vet to continue treatment overnight.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Portrait of a sick kitty.

Sam and I cringed. Hearing "Emergency Vet" means huge expense. **How were we going to pay for all of this? How could we not? We HAD to find a way.** Both of us were panicking. We had to wait and see how Nicky would respond to treatment first before we'd even know if he needed to be moved.

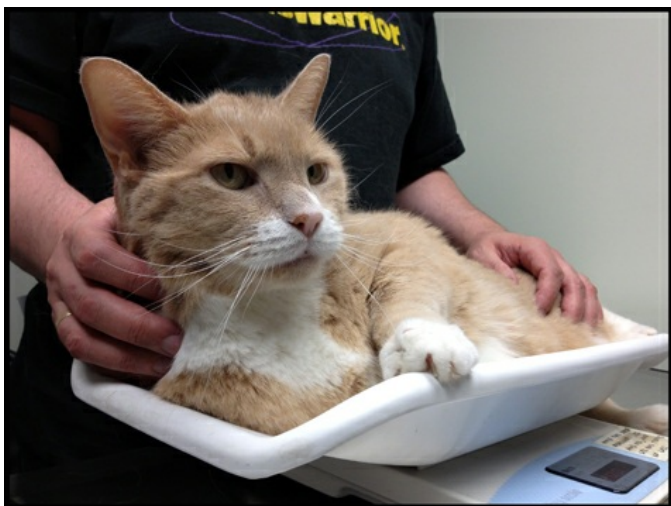
Nicky's temperature when to 105.1°F. After two hours it went down to about 103°F so there was a chance a few more hours of treatment would benefit him.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Another Vet, another examination with Sam reaching out to comfort his cat.

It would have been somehow manageable if we only had to help Nicky, but after getting him settled at the Emergency Vet and putting another charge on my AmEx, we discovered he wasn't the only cat who was not feeling well.

With all the commotion going on with Nicky, I didn't get to pay as much attention to the others cats as I would have liked. Even with that, I did notice something out of the ordinary. **When we got home around 7pm, I realized I hadn't seen Spencer ALL DAY.** I knew he hadn't eaten his breakfast. He's not always a fan of turkey, but this cat always shows up for a meal.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Nicky with Sam.

Sam and I tore through the house, calling out to Spencer. The longer it took, the more I started to panic. *Had he gotten outside? Was he stuck in a closet?* Spencer has no real meow, so he couldn't cry to us for help. Where the heck was he? Why wasn't he showing up for dinner? **Now that I thought about it, where were the rest of the cats? None of them were hungry and waiting by their food dishes. Something was wrong. Something bad.**

Sam found Spencer in the basement, which is very tough area for the cats to get into. For Spencer to not be near me or near any of us was a bad sign. **Spencer wouldn't eat his dinner. In fact most of the cats were off their food.** I told myself there was no need to panic. No one would die without eating for a day.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Nicky at the Emergency Vet hooked up to his Heska VetIV 2.2

The next morning we got the news that Nicky's fever broke and he'd eaten a small amount of food. He was ready to come home. The news should have been cause for celebration, but **Spencer had vanished again and I knew he had to go to the Vet, too. It wasn't a big, obvious sign of sickness but it's so out of the ordinary I had to make sure he wasn't sick, too.**

Again I started to panic. We'd just spent so much money on Nicky, would anything be left for Spencer? **I was angry and resentful, all stemming from the fear that I wouldn't be able to do for Spencer what we just did for Nicky. If Spencer was ailing, I HAD to do something for him, but my own Vet refused to just give me antibiotics without seeing the cat first!** I realized they were right, but I was truly hurting. There's dust in my bank account. I thought about home remedies and trying to avoid a Vet visit, but Spencer was due for blood work and a checkup anyway. **If I could avoid hospitalizing him, I'd be able to have the exam and tests for done, but I couldn't do much more.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Saying good night to Nicky.

I took Spencer's temperature. It was 102.3°F which put him in the range to be percolating a fever. I was really missing Dr. Larry and wishing I didn't have to see Dr. C, but he'd seen Nicky so he could compare the cat's symptoms.

The exam went fairly well. The Vet retained use of his fingers. **Spencer's not the easiest cat to mess with and he gets crabby if he's at the Vet.** I warned the staff and fussed over Dr. C, worried he'd get bitten. Spencer was pretty good-for Spencer. They managed to get some blood and sent it out for testing. Since we didn't know what was going on the Vet suggested putting him on antibiotics *"just in case,"* but I won't do that without having a darn good reason. It could make whatever is going on even worse. I'd do the best I could for Spencer until we had the test results.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Nicky being a good boy, as usual.

I started making charts and lists of each cat-if they ate, if so, what they ate. I was looking for a pattern. **I began to have suspicions that Gracie, Petunia and Jackson were also getting sick based on my notes about them not eating and their behavior.** I knew I'd just had Boogie in the house. He was separated from my cats and I washed my hands and showered after I was with him, even though I didn't touch the kitten until the last day he was here. **Boogie was VERY sick, but he had an upper respiratory infection, not something potentially gastrointestinal. What was going on?**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Hiding under the bed between two storage containers-not a good sign.

Feeding time was bizarre, maybe one or two cats showed up for their food. The others weren't even in the vicinity. **I'm so accustomed to the energy of feeding time, the cats circling, meowing, the sound of them lapping at their food. It was too quiet. My babies weren't eating. My fear factor increased tenfold.**

Did I bring something into the house to sicken them? How was I going to be able to provide more and more Vet care for ALL my cats at the SAME TIME? How was I going to keep each one alive? Some of them are very tough to handle. How could I help them survive whatever was going on?

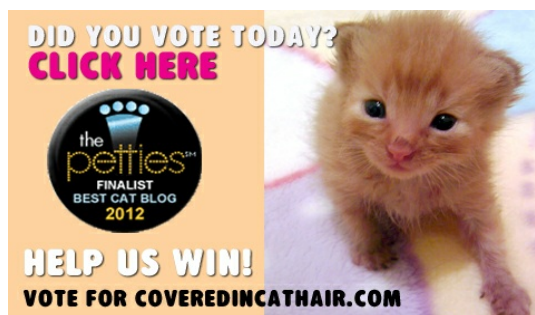


©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. My poor, sweet baby, Spencer-the mascot of Covered in Cat Hair.

Saturday night the mood in the house was downright miserable. **Nicky stopped eating again. of course, the benefits of the IV wore off.** Whatever he had, whatever Spencer and the others may have was not going to just go away. We had to buckle down and figure something out. The clock was ticking. **The specter of Hepatic Lipidosis [4] was hanging over our heads. If the cats didn't start eating soon, they could all sicken and die. This is why you can't put a cat on a diet. This is why if you don't get some food into the cat after four days, your cat could enter a whole new world of pain.**

We were approaching day three. **Time was running out** and we had more questions than we had answers....

Stay tuned for part three next..and YES, there IS a silver lining coming...



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Comments

Mon, 2012-07-30 17:43 — [Teri and the ca... \(not verified\)](#) [19]

Tears and Fears [20]

Reading your post, I sometimes wonder how those of us with cats in our care can carry on under the weight of the stress when something like this hits. And then you find the strength because they are depending on you, and even if you fail, you have tried. I have not followed your blog a long time, but this is a very tough time for you and the kitties...but you are making headway, and thank you for trying...

Oh, and you can diet a cat, but you just have to be very slow and gradual, no more than 4 ounce a month for an obese cat, for as you said, HL can happen not only when they completely stop eating, but even when they are eating less than 50% of their nutritional needs...

Mon, 2012-07-30 19:01 — UnderThePawRescue (not verified)

more!! lol ^[21]

PLEASE type quickly! I need to know the silver lining or Ill burst!!! lol I have a small rescue too and five of my own. I worry constantly about money and if one gets sick how will we cope. Being insured really does help but you still have to find it before you get your refund! We've all been keeping our paws crossed for you and your furry family. Much love to you all xx

Tue, 2012-07-31 13:18 — Anne (not verified)

Bless you and all your ^[22]

Bless you and all your critters. I am praying for everyones recovery from whatever it is that is ailing them. You do so much for so many I am sorry you are facing this.

Breathe. Know you have people thinking of you and sending prayers for you.

Anne

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- [1] <http://www.fritolay.com/our-snacks/lays-wavy-original.html>
- [2] <http://www.felinecrf.com/>
- [3] <http://coveredincathair.com/content/tough-day-nicky>
- [4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feline_hepatic_lipidosis
- [5] <http://petties.dogtime.com/>
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