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Timmy's Ashes Project. One Cat Who Changed the World.

Fri, 2016-04-29 12:50 — Robin Olson

When I was 16, my very first serious boyfriend and I traveled about 90 minutes from my parents home to the "northwest corner" of Connecticut. My boyfriend wanted to impress me by taking me somewhere romantic and it was a big deal to be able to go so far from home, alone with a boy! I remember walking hand-in-hand with him, feeling like we'd always be together. A sparkling waterfall roared nearby, but we were too in love to hear it, busy sneaking kisses along the steep path to the top of the falls where we could kiss some more.



©2016 Robin A.F. Olson. Covered bridge entrance to Kent Falls.

[Kent Falls](#) ^[1] is far more than a tiny state park nestled into the shoulder of a the southern Berkshire mountains. After almost 4 decades, it's entered my bloodstream. Although my boyfriend and I didn't last, I continued to visit the falls over the years, especially off-season, right after a heavy rain. The falls were almost bursting at the seams and the effect was dramatic.

My mother and I often went to the falls together and, in fact, today, when I returned there, I flashed back to those times. I had a difficult relationship with my mother, but at Kent Falls we were too busy taking photos to get on each other's nerves...okay until she asked me, as she often did, to stand somewhere precarious so she could get a good photo. If I fell to my death, she'd worry about getting the shot over saving my life, but in a way I couldn't blame her. We often walked the trails in the area watching others get a bit too close to the water's edge. My mother would whisper to me; "FALL!" hoping her desire to see someone fall into the raging river would come to pass. Did I say my mother was a sweet angel? No. I did not.



©2005 Robin A.F. Olson. My mother on the "do not climb" area.

Our last trip to Kent Falls was about 6 months before my mother died. Her passing was unexpected and terribly shocking. She'd kept her heart failure a secret from me and I found out the hard way when she didn't answer her phone one morning and I raced to her home to find her already gone from this world. It was this last trip that was our best, and why Timmy's Ashes Stones needed to become part of our memory tapestry there.

I was driving north, about 30 minutes away from the falls. My mother and I weren't saying much, the usual tension filled the air. Off to our right, soaring high above us we saw a large bird.

I said to my mother; *"Is that a bald eagle?"*

"Yes, I think it is!" she replied excitedly.

Then suddenly, what at first looked like a white ribbon, quickly emerged out of the back of the eagle and fell just as quickly to the earth.

Once again I asked my mother; *"Was that what I think it was? Did that eagle just take a shit?"*

Without pause, my mother turned to me and put her hand on my arm. She replied; ***"Turn the car around and head home. It can't get any better than this."***



©2016 Robin A.F. Olson. One of Timmy's stones. It reads: "Timmy was here."

Both laughing, the tension evaporated between us. By the time we reached the falls they were broiling and bubbling as we'd never seen before. The nearby [Bulls Bridge](#) ^[2] area was terrifying, the river was lapping against the banks as we passed a bit too close by on a tiny slick path that hugged the side of a hill. We got our photos. We didn't fall to our death (*or see anyone fall, though one guy was pushing his luck*) and before we headed home we stopped at a café and had grilled cheese sandwiches and tea. It was a perfect day.

I cherish this place like no other, so that's why today, on a brisk, brilliant day, I drove my car north, to Kent Falls. It was the first time I'd been there since my mother died so it was an especially meaningful trip.



©2016 Robin A.F. Olson. Base of Kent Falls near where I placed the stones.

When I arrived, there were barely a handful of people at the park. As I walked over the narrow wooden covered bridge to access the grounds, one that was built in the early 1930's, as the ghosts of my past came to visit me. On that bridge, faded and softened with time, are my initials carved into the wood, along with those of my first boyfriend, David. I can't even find them now, but I know they're still there. The dreams of our life together are long gone, but the memory of that first love will always be in my heart.



As I walked along the path that lead to the falls, I remembered holding my young nephew's hand on his first pilgrimage to this place, my mother urging us to stop every few steps so she could take another picture of us. She couldn't capture the feeling of family, of love and togetherness. She was too uncomfortable to be affectionate or say; "I love you," but we knew she did as she clicked the shutter, yelling at her quirky old autofocus camera to "FOCUS DAMMIT!"

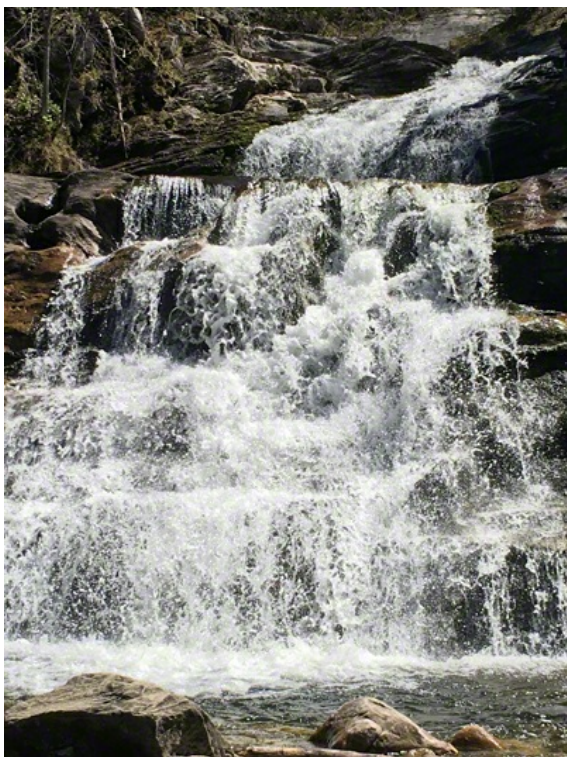


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Then my thoughts turned to Timmy, a cat I've never met, who's life was cruelly shortened by a toxic exposure to over-the-counter flea treatments. I think about his mom, Claudia and how her heart is broken now that Timmy's gone. **I think about how if Timmy hadn't gotten sick, Claudia never would have created a non-toxic soap ^[3] that my rescue, Kitten Associates ^[4], can safely use on the tiniest of kittens. How I don't have to worry I'm going to harm the most innocent of creatures because one woman loved her cat so very much and who loved all of us so very much that she wanted to protect every cat and dog in the whole wide world.**

So she did.

It takes a certain kind of brave heart to be able to face the painful daily reminder of seeing your cat wobble when he walks, his nerves forever damaged, but to turn that heartache into helping others so they never have to see their own cat suffer, too—well that needs to be honored.



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That's why I wanted to tell you about my most special place on earth. It's full of ghosts, tears and laughter, but mostly it's filled with love.

As I walked up an incline near the falls, I found a place very close to the water, but not too close so that Timmy's memorial stones would wash away. I knew that even if they did, that was okay, too because Timmy's memory would move along the river and find a new place to be discovered. **Now his stones are part of my memory and part of my life. He may have been a cat I've never met, but his loss is just as vivid as if I lost one of my own.**

©2016 Robin A.F. Olson. Stone placement.

I sat on a fallen tree near the falls after I placed and photographed the stones. There was no one else around and I was glad to have some privacy. **I cried for Timmy, for how unfair it was that he died so young**. I cried for his mom, Claudia, wishing I could give her a hug and tell her it's going to be okay and that I'm so proud of what she's done to honor her beloved cat. I cried because I wish I'd hear my mother's voice, tell me to *sit up straight and tip my head down, just a tiny bit*, so I wouldn't have a double chin in the photo she was about to take of me. **I cried because somehow 40 years have slipped by and I realize I haven't done enough good in my own life.**

Latitude

41.775903

Longitude

-73.415103

Accuracy of GPS signal: 98 ft

Time since signal received: 1 seconds



Geotag of stones.

Timmy and Claudia are an inspiration to me and a reminder to all of us that one cat with one person who loves them CAN change the world. I hope that tonight when you're with your cat or cats, you think about ways you can make the world a better place for all of us and get out there and do just that.

Fly free sweet Timmy. Thank you and your mom for making our world a better, safer place.

[#TimmysAshesProject](#) (5)

[#TinyTimmy](#) (6)



[#BetheWave](#)

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