

I want to start off by letting everyone know that I wasn't supposed to take home and foster the husky that I am writing about. I was at the humane society office finalizing an adoption for my current foster dog and sending him off with his new family. Then, I walked "Memaw" and I fell in love. Memaw was a 7-year-old red husky, full of life and just a sparkle in her eye. I had asked if I could be her foster mom since I was there and my house was "empty" (I have 8 animals of my own but who's counting?). I was allowed to take her home but noticed that she had two bumps on her nose and had some green goop coming out of her left eye. I took her to the vet's office and got there just before they closed. The vet had said it was probably just a lot of sinus blockage and to flush her nose with saline and wipe her eye, along with the anti-biotics he gave to us. I brought Memaw home and my boyfriend was a little confused. I had left with a 15lb dog and come home with a 50+lb dog.

We started Memaw on her anti-biotics the next morning, wiped out the gross discharge that was coming out of her eye and shot saline up her nose. I know it was uncomfortable and she probably started to dislike us, but it was for the best. I was sure this was going to make her better. Day 10 of 14 of the anti-biotics she wasn't getting any better, instead, she was getting worse. Her bumps had grown from the size of a dime to the size of a quarter in what seemed to be over night. We went back up to the vet's office where they took her off the medicine and confirmed that I wasn't losing my mind or seeing things, the bumps had tripled in size. We had her nose biopsied and went home with the cone of shame. The biopsy came back about a week later, one of my worst fears, I had become a hospice (foster hospice) mom. Memaw had a tumor in her nose that had traces of brain cells in it. I was told that I was lucky that she was still so sweet and didn't seem to be bothered as the tumor was coming down from the frontal lobe which controls emotions in dogs. I was given pain meds to keep her comfortable in what could be her last days of life. I couldn't believe it, I was in shock. This wasn't supposed to happen to me. I mean I had heard about the special kind of people who take in old, sick and dying dogs to give them their best life at the end but never imagined it would happen to me.

We continued her pain meds for 5 days. One night I had put everyone in their crates (except Memaw, she got to sleep wherever she wanted). I woke up and had a feeling that something wasn't right. Walked to the kitchen and there was Memaw standing up panting with her cone on. I loosened her cone and let her outside thinking maybe she had to potty. I went back to bed a few minutes later. Listened to Memaw lay down then I nodded off. I woke again that same night just a few hours later to yet another feeling that something was wrong. I got back up and walked up my hall and there Memaw was again standing in the kitchen panting. I gave her a pain pill hoping that would help her settle down and let her get some rest, and it did.

The following morning, I was transporting a couple dogs from Johnson City to Asheville when my boyfriend called me. He had said Memaw hadn't laid down to rest in a few hours and has just been standing either in the living room or kitchen. It dawned on me, maybe she was panting because she couldn't breathe through her nose and maybe she was standing so her lungs could expand all the way out. Memaw was essentially hanging on all night while I slept. I came to the decision on the silent car ride home that it wasn't fair to keep her going like this. She had little hope for a cure and the surgery was expensive with a very bleak outcome.

I called the vets and they asked me to come in that afternoon. I cried the whole way home. When I got home I picked up Memaw and took her to the park so she could just lay in the sun, we went to Starbucks

where she got whipped cream. Made a stop at Pal's where I ordered her a cheese burger and two plain hot dogs. We sat at the vets office and ate all her goodies while waiting in the lobby. We were called back and I held her head in my arms while she drifted away just whispering "I'm so sorry" and "I love you" in her ear. I went home that evening and just sat in my room and cried. My boyfriend picked up my slack and took care of all our animals.

A few weeks later I got a call that the humane society had paid for Memaw to be cremated for me and I could pick her up. I needed that. I was going through my stages of grief. Stages of grief for a dog that I had a little over a month. Memaw is buried next to my rose bush and this last summer we had the most beautiful roses. Memaw was my first and only fospice animal. My confession is this: that 7-year-old red husky, showed me just how strong I could be. She taught me that I can't save them all no matter what I do and that's okay.

Kylie