

From Fluffy with Love

By Lekshmi Nair

A line from a famous Malayalam song has been haunting me ever since I heard it for the first time when I was a little child..."Like the night to the day, I bid you adieu"(rathri.. pakalinodennapole yathra chodippu nhan),it says...How does the night say good bye to the day? I have wondered. Is it that the separation is inevitable, and so the parting note is one of helplessness? Or is it that there is hope, and that the separation is but transient, because tomorrow again, they will meet?

The first I heard about Fluffy was from Ike. "He's blind, deaf and mute. just like me." he had said in his characteristic manner. I am sure that the first emotion that I had at that moment was sympathy for the helpless creature. I wished at that time, just like the normal human being that I am, why the poor thing wasn't given a merciful reverie. I had not imagined that I would ever see him. But see him I did. A fluffy package of weathered white, now in the brink of brown, moving like a toy-car - forward till a block came, and reverse when he hit something. He may have been deaf, mute and blind, but his instinct for his loved ones was still swell. He could make out when it was 'biscuit time', or when his master was having his meal. He would grunt when he wanted to relieve himself, and settle himself cozily when he wanted his sleep. Contrary to all my gloomy canvas of a dull and painful life, he was a dignified old canine. In my few days' stay in his house he would answer to my call of 'biscuit' too.

His fifteen summers are an equivalent to a human hundred. At this age, he didn't serve any materialistic purpose which dogs usually do. And yet, Fluffy was taken care of better than most aging parents. He had finished his commendable innings and was at the dusk of his life. Yes, the option of mercy killing was surely there, and yet, he was waited upon by his children who were once his parents. Many a times, I heard that he is "almost gone" and I would say, "No... he'll be fine".

But today, he finally left.

The learning that Fluffy left for me to tell the world was one of patience and perseverance. The huge inflammation that he had in his body must have been dreadfully painful, and yet, he held his fort as much as he could. He was as dedicated as his masters were. I am sure, that in spite of his formidable senile ailments, within himself he tried his best not to trouble his "mom and dad". I am sure he also realized how much sleep they had lost taking care of him. Not once did they complain about having to take care of him. Their worry was only that he was suffering so much and they were helpless.

If he wanted to leave a note for them, I am sure this is what he would have written:

"Dear Papa and Mama

I know you are both very sad today, because I have left you. But to me it is more painful because I could not do anything for the love you gave me. I still remember the first day I came home, and then I remember today. I always knew that I was very fortunate to have you as parents. All these years have gone past so soon, and I really wish they hadn't gone past so soon, because I would really wish to go back to my healthy days and spend more time with you. Mama, I wish I could run along once more with all our cats. I wish I could have your chicken and rice served with so much love once more. I wish I wasn't so ill that you had to stay awake almost all night for so many days. Papa, I saw those tears in your eyes as you were making my final bed. I wish I could just once more sit in your cozy hold. I wish I could sit by you waiting for my share of your breakfast. But in spite of all the wishes, please be sure that I'll sleep fine because the bed was made by you. I am not in pain anymore, and the angels have taken me to a wonderful place. You both made me feel that I am the best dog in the world, and now, I know that I was the most loved too. You gave me the best of what you could, and put me on priority when I was ill. Papa, you have been so busy at work all these days, coming home so late, and yet, you wouldn't allow me to walk when I wanted to go out. You carried me so lovingly when I felt dirty even to myself. Mama, your back is aching now because of all that care you took of me. You sneezed and suffered because of me. And yet, all that you could think of giving me was more love. You are both the Magi's gift to me... The best that I could have. I wish all the dogs were as lucky as I. I don't have hands to soothe your tired bodies, but I have a heart to pray.

With lots of love,
Fluffy"

PS - Fluffy, Thank you for eating those biscuits from my hand. You thus made me a part of your good fortune. I hope our farewell to you is only one of transience, and one that is meant to meet again. I believe that God made us meet so that I too will shed a tear in your memory, because, your life is a celebration of love and bonding.

(06 April 2009...Anniversary of the day when Lekshmi's mother left this world.)