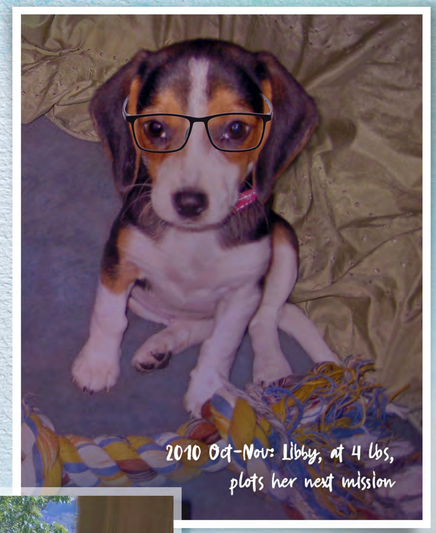
Liberty Belle

8/1/10 - 4/23/22

We have a Beagle kid named Liberty. She is a puppy mill reject, rescued from death at a Missouri mill. Our Liberty Belle is an enterprising girl, brown-eyed and serious with lips etched in a permanent grin. She is my sentinel, forever on watch by my side.

Libby lives by The Nose, smelling the world in secret codes. Dragging us on mystery tours toward a squirrel, hatching bugs, someone's tossed lunch. Proud, yet vulnerable. Her love runs deep.



The Professor, The Pilot

Stoic. Serious. Focused. Flying her planes, leading our packs. CEO of Dogs. Enterprising. On Many Missions. Entrepreneurial and Visionary. We call Ethel Ms. Sassypants Super Model, and Liberty, The Professor. She looks focused and academic, like Snoopy as The Flying Ace, piloting his doghouse in strategic ops against his nemesis, The Red Baron. It's a beagle thing…

Beagle Deep Concentration Face (BDCF)

There is this thing about beagles that Charles Schultz captured perfectly in Snoopy. Beagles are stupid cute, but have very serious expressions. They appear lost in deep thought, plotting… as Snoopy did in the role of The Flying Ace, in pursuit of The Red Baron, piloting his airborne dog house over war zones. Libby, too, has Deep Concentration Face (DCF), as she preps for her next Big Thing (toppling a trashcan, chewing an item to smithereens, escape from a gated area, etc).

Sat 4/23/22 9:42am IN HOURS BEFORE DEATH ~ I used to grow frustrated with your walk style: Drop and roll. A seasonal event to revel in the glory of rabbit poop, budding plants, insects awakening. Suddenly, dead weight at the end of one leash. So the walker tugs a bit, till you realize you're dragging The Beagle – belly-up, legs wiggly, a dance of joy. I used to grow frustrated with your walk style: Hazardous nose sprints. A lifelong Prisoner of the Nose, you tug and pull from curb to sidewalk, across lawns… Never a straight line. In pursuit of The Squirrel. The Bunny. The Unknown Scent. Dogs Who Were Here. A walker's arm and back can feel wrenched to the core. Leashes become a wild tangle. Any walker requires deft arm and wrist shifts to adapt. **Now walks have a hole. A presence removed. An energy erased. The very current of each walk has changed. As if a switch has been turned off. I find agony – sheer agony – in the absence of your energy. Liberty Belle Shoss-Ballard: You Put "The Adventure" In Every Adventure Walk.**

Truth is, it's obscene to stare at the blank sidewalk space between Mabel and Etelah as we travel more miles without you. It's shocking. The fulcrum gone. The base that guides our adventures. Weeks, months and years. Miles traveled with you. Tugging me criss-cross after each new scent. Drop and roll in the grass. Lurching toward trees with tiny fleeing squirrels. Nose to the ground. The Nose Walks. You are the fulcrum. The rest of us pivot from your decisions. You lead our pack, the "essential role in an activity, event or situation." Etelah's a Libby Fangirl. Me too. Libby is the family fulcrum. It's obscene to expect us to carry on.

ful·crum: the point on which a lever rests or is supported and on which it pivots.
a thing that plays a central or essential role in an activity, event, or situation.

AR2012, DC. The Girls

Enterprising Girl

Dumpster Diver. Invasion of the kitchen-closet trashcan. We must be vigilant about closing the closet door! Otherwise, expect a trail of licked-out tin cans, foraged food remains, teeth-marked bottles… from the kitchen to 2nd-floor steps. Upstairs wastebaskets are stored on ledges, dresser tops and anywhere beyond the reach of The Nose.

Escape Artist. We always know that when our dogs break out (of gated area), help themselves to trash leftovers, or nab a few kitten turds… they follow Libby's lead. "Come on you guys, it'll be fun. Let's live a little!" That's why the very energy in our home has shifted. Even when sick, Libby did her best to lead. And that made Puppy ecstatically happy…

4/25/22 6:02pm: Libby rests in mischief and plotting. The most engaged dog ever. We admire her entrepreneurial spirit. She uses her nose to nudge open doors, push through barrier gates, topple kitchen trashcans. Her long tongue to pull cat food plates off counters. She outsmarts every blockade to the litter box (doo doo tootsie pops!). We scold and laugh, clean up trash, litter and crumbs… Beagles, we say again and again, aren't like other dogs. When I have 4 dogs, it feels like 6. Libby counts as a full two dogs… I am filled with rage now. At whom? Fate? 11 yrs is too young. I know a 16-yr old beagle and another who is 14. I keep thinking we have to pick Libby up from VSS. The quiet in the phone haunts me.

10-8-10 Libby and Ethel. Flawdogs, rescue day

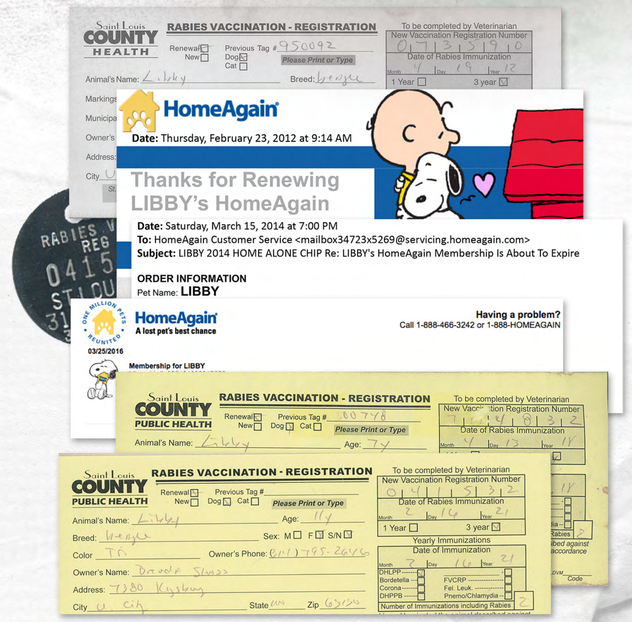
Aug 2013

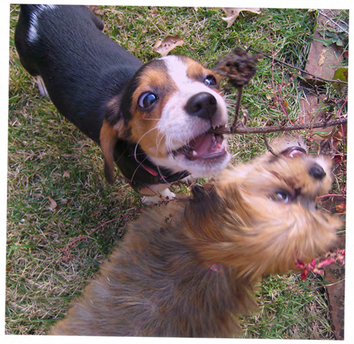
8-10-12 Myrtle Beach

Aug 2013 Outer Banks, NC

Cocky Head & Joker's Grin. Say her name, crinkle the treats bags or open the canister, make any sudden noise… Libby is there, head cocked in a quizzical look. Every fur strand on her body stands at attention. Mouth in permanent grin shape, right/left dark edges (against white fur) curl up like The Joker. Libby is the sweetest, most cooperative and loving girl in all of life – except Mabel.

Mon 3/21/22 6:30am Leg Break: She sits in my lap, belly-up with a joker's grin. Brown clear eyes lock with mine. Serious girl. But 4 legs flail. The back two bent, frog style. I rub her white smooth belly. Soft eyes lock with mine. Yours Truly, Libby. The kisses begin. Velvet tongue warm and certain. Kisses from my chin to forehead. Bump bump bump. We schooch down each step. Just like this. My child in my arms. Bump Kiss Bump Kiss… till we reach the bottom floor. Bump Kiss Bump Kiss. Here we sit, suspended. Libby Lu





sen·ti·nel

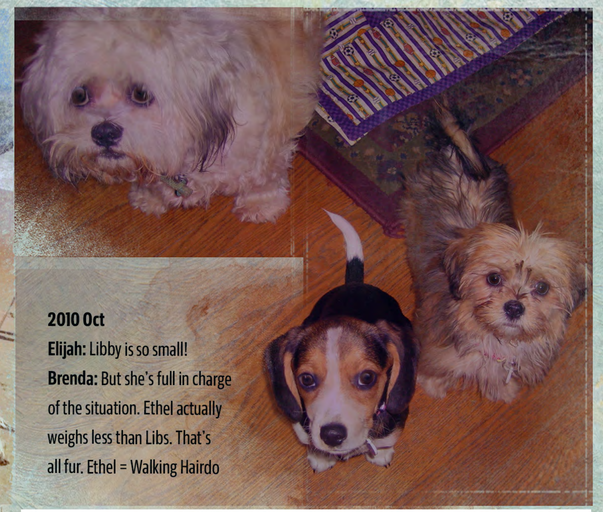
NOUN: soldier or guard whose job is to stand, keep watch. **VERB:** station a soldier or guard by to keep watch. ***"a wide course had been roped off and sentineled with police [beagles!]"***

Brenda's constant bodyguard since the day Ethel is killed. I can't go downstairs without her at my heels. We call her The Sentinel, Major Sentinel.

Liberty Belle
Libby J. Shoss
Libby LuLu
Libby Lu
Wibby Wu
Libs
Libby Schwibby
Libs Schwibbs
Wibby Schwibby
The Libster
Brown-Eyed Girl
Libayah
The Sentinel

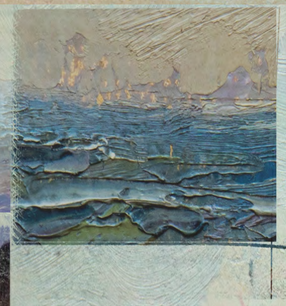
Most Beautiful Brown-Eyed Girl

2013 Aug Outer Banks, NC



2010 Oct
Elijah: Libby is so small!
Brenda: But she's full in charge of the situation. Ethel actually weighs less than Libs. That's all fur. Ethel = Walking Hairdo

2012 Aug Myrtle Beach, SC



LIBBY & HER LHASAS

Brenda: I've never seen them smashed into one of those little beds together. I turn around and there they are. So cute!
Grady: I see them every morning like that.
Elijah: Puppy looks so funny.
Brenda: Look at Puppy's wittle bwack mouth under her wittle button nose.

9/15/20 Morning Smash

2010 Nov Schluffy Crew

2011 Aug Venice Beach, CA

2/1/12 Ethel's last day alive

Libby & Her Lhasas

2010 Oct-Nov: Libby and Ethel launch careers in chewing stuff.

LIBBY & ETHEL > From birth to death, Libby is never without a Lhasa Apso at her side. As soul mate. Best Friend. Disciple. Partner In Crime. Libs enters this world with Ethel, two upside-down cupcakes rescued from the same Missouri puppy mill. Their bond is indelible. A contiguous canine force that endures after Ethel is killed. Ethel's cruel absence casts Libby as the Alpha-Protector in our pack. To her, the family is broken and she must defend us... As pups, the wee co-conspirators chew up wood siding around the rim of our house. A fav project while out in the yard. They spoon during sleep, as if a warm current runs from one small body into the other.

LIBBY & ETELAH > When Etelah comes home, Libby knows: Mom adopted this Lhatese furball for me. Though Libby is never the same after Ethel's murder by speeding car, she instantaneously mentors Etelah in the Ways Of The Beagle. Etelah becomes Libby's Fangirl for Life. A chaser of squirrels and birds. Rabbit poop roll-outs. Territorial pee pee marker. Etelah takes her cues from Libby – doesing stuff that "Ethel dogs" normally doesn't does. They travel the house and sidewalks as one. Inseparable. When Libby dies, Etelah searches for her guide. She lays at our back door to listen for Libby's heavy pant. Waiting. For Etelah, life without Libby is incomprehensible.

THE BEAGLE MIND MELD & MANDY >
Libby enjoys alpha status in the 4-pack and deploys her Beagle Mind Meld on Mandy. Libby stalks Mandy's large Ewok head, goes nose to nose, and silently stares into Mandy's eyes. An unflinching stare. Mandy can easily back away, but she's glued in place. The snarl begins. Her underbite is fierce. Mandy's snarl-tooth growl lasts as long as it takes to stand her ground. Seriously. We've timed it. 1 minute, 3 minutes... no breaks for breath. Mandy is suspended in Libby's Mind Meld, as if mystic beagle powers hypnotize her. Libby never breaks gaze. It's an Olympian level power play and Libby is the Zen Master. On occasion, Libby licks the Snarl Tooth. A light, flickering lick to drive Mandroo bonkers. Still, Mamoo growls with great stamina. A single, unwavering note: Grrrrrrrrrrrrr...

Honorable Mention: Libby also climbs atop Mandy for a good humping. Mandy hates this, so we knock The Libster off. But the tenacity! At times, Libby back-ends into Mandy, groin over face, for a truly humiliating hump. Bad girl Libby! The visuals are remarkable. Libby is all-alpha, all the time.

Sun 4/24/22 AFTER LIBBY >
Grady: Yes Libby was a real sweetie...
Brenda: She is so much more. Strong. Noble. Enterprising. She leads the energy at home. Beagle Mind Melds over Mandy, despite respect for Mandy's Grand Poobah status. Libby is soulmate to Ethel, with emotions so deep, she vomits on the street precisely where Ethel is killed. Libby makes Etelah her disciple and playmate for life. Tragically, Libby instigates death-fights with Mabel. Stronger Mabel leaves Libby with bloody ears, torn skin, a crushed paw, and the broken leg that ultimately kills her. Libby Lu is devoted to me in a way I've never experienced with any human. For better or worse, Libby is the fulcrum who wields our lives. On gate-separated floors. Forever on watch. But deeply in love with our original beagle.

9/15/20: Libby & Etelah Smash

Team Hound?

2/1/12 Libby with Ethel on her last day of life before killed by a speeding car. Mabel arrives from Thailand 2 weeks before.

The Sentinel.

After Ethel is killed, Libby becomes my guardian. Literally. I can't go downstairs late night without her at my heels. We call her The Sentinel. Hours after Ethel's slaughter, Libby walks with my Dad to the spot on the street where a speeding car smashed Ethel into irreparable pieces. At that spot, Libby vomits. Twice. *How does she know?* So holistically that her small beagle body has physicalized her pain? Her shock? She knows.

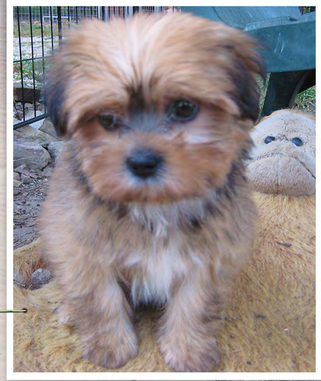
And this day indelibly changes Libby. She is forever at my side. My lifelong Sentinel. I think she associates Mabel, who arrives only weeks before Ethel's murder, with the tragedy. She protects me from Mabel! Does she forever see Mabel as a symbol of the darkest day? Years out from the killing, Libby bullies and triggers random death-fights with Mabel. Libby is the instigator. Mabel fights harder, leaving Libby with ripped ears, crushed paws... The final fight – that ends with Libby's front lower leg bones shattered – is likely what kills her. Her managed kidney disease cannot handle this trauma. My Sentinel looks out for me till her very last breath. She is my shadow, my bodyguard, even as she hobbles and gallops on her cast-wrapped leg. Libby is gone. Libby and Ethel are no more.

2/1/12
This might not work out... Weird. I wonder if they liked one another, or had some pack/family bond, in between random death-fights?

Mabel & Libby.

Fear. Then cautious relief. That's what we see in animals after disasters. A tail wags. Eyes soften. A faint purr...neigh, grunt or moo. A will to live propels them. Mabel is emaciated, rescued from a bridge over floodwaters with a dislocated pelvis. Each day at the Bangkok disaster shelter, I carry her from pen to grass for pee-poops. She rides over my shoulder, so her painful pelvic area hangs vertically. Her deer-like face rests near my chin. She looks straight into my eyes. I'm toast. "You're not even my type," I chide her. But a light flickers in this nameless Soi (street) dog. I start to call her Mabel. And so, Mabel she becomes.

Once stable, Mabel flies 9000 miles from Thailand to join our family: Rebekkah, a Tri-Tabby Dilute in White; Isaiah, an Orange Tabby; Baby Noah, a Katrina Tuxedo cat; Liberty, a Beagle; Mandy, a Lhasa Apso; and Ethel, a Lhasa mix killed just two weeks later. Cautious Mabel eyes the other dogs to see how to be a "pet." She is a graceful Basenji mix with soulful eyes. Always polite, The Lady. Ethel is the first to reach out, in backyard hunts for twigs and nuts. Mabel tries to hound around with Libby, but the beagle is wary. A pheromone conflict? Something in the eyes? Libby's racist? We never know. After Ethel is killed, Libby conflates that tragedy with Mabel's arrival. Their death-fights are random, but distinct: Guttural screams; screeching nails; and teeth clamped into flesh. At the neck. Crushed bones. Ripped across ears and bellies. We spray water guns, broom bash and tug until we fall to the ground. We are dragged. Bitten. We rush one wounded hound or the other to Vet ER for stitches, splints, surgery. Libby instigates battles. Mabel fights harder. Initially, a year or more passes between fights. But as the hounds age, their clashes worsen. In latter years, we live on gate-separated floors: Brenda upstairs with Libby and Etelah. Mabel forever a den dweller, alongside Grady. Oddly, they miss each other. The pack is severed. They bond in moments on walks. But the Next Fight is ever-present.



Thu, 10/7/10 • Gnsives@aol.com Subject: Beagle Baby • You might want to come on Fri. We have a visiting yard out front so they can be loose together and safe. I'm sending a few pics of the 2 girls, both 9-weeks old...

Subject: Couple questions before we come on Friday / Re: Beagle Baby

"Shit" is the only word that comes to mind with regard to the fact that the Lhasa is also a baby-baby + a girl. I hate you (not really). We'll come Fri. I'll just have to hide Ms. Beagle from Grady until he gets out of town. I am torn about the Lhasa. I feel sick to my stomach with yearning, but know I can't afford her and that Grady might walk out on me.

QUESTIONS: **1)** What is wrong with the beagle's belly? In photo, it looks red, bumpy, irritated like skin allergies I deal with in Mandy. Does she have a skin condition? **2)** Do you think it's safe or even a good idea to bring Mandy, our original FlawDog Lhasa Apso?

Ethel & Libby

FLAWDOGS a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation **DATE:** 10/1/10

Dedicated to the rescue, rehab, and rehoming of little breeder "leftovers"

So in this world of the simple and odd,
The bent and the plain, the unbalanced bod,
The imperfect people and differently pawed,
Some live without love...THAT'S how they're flawed.

I am a Brown Lhasa Apso (M)(F) that you have chosen to make a member of your family…This is our lucky day! I have waited for you all my life. We will be partners; I will be there for you and you will love and care for me. It may take me some time to understand the wonders of being a pet, and I may be confused for a while….bear with me.

FLAWDOGS ADOPTIONS wants your adoption experience of a rescued animal to be rewarding. It is assumed that you have asked questions and received answers that satisfy you regarding your new family member. We DO NOT withhold any information, but since our pets have either been recently rescued from a breeder or turned in by their owner, their history may be sketchy or even inaccurate. We want you to be aware that animals in general often have health or behavioral problems that are not immediately apparent and that that could be true with a "Flawdog", also. We will make you aware of any problems, health or otherwise, that we know about. **Please contact us at the email listed below immediately if you believe that your new pet is seriously ill the first week. We will not pay for veterinarian services after the adoption.** If you decide that you cannot keep your adopted pet, please contact us first…But we want you to be very sure about your commitment to this pet BEFORE you take it home. These little guys have already been through enough. We give a 50% refund if the dog is returned within 7 days with their original paperwork. All dogs get vaccinations and deworming as soon as we get them here at the sanctuary. Our vets perform alters, dentals, rabies and any other needed surgeries. Below you will find the dates they received those. It is assumed that you will provide all regular and emergency vet care for your new pet. **Your printed signature below indicates that you have read, understand and agree with the above contract and information below. Deposits are not refundable….they indicate commitment to the contract.**

Ethel was born 2 DAYS BEFORE LIBBY!

Bordatella 10/5/10 Panacur &DHPP: 1st (2nd) final: 10/5/10 Alter/~~Dental/Rabies~~: 10/6/10
DOB/Age: 7/30/10 FINAL DHPP due: 10/26/10 (cheapest with veterinarians at Petco).
Rabies Tag# → New owner will be responsible for rabies vacc. @ 4-6 months of age. HW negative (SNAP Test)/preventative & topical flea last given: __/__/__
Adoption Donation: $ 250 Deposit: $___ Microchip#
An Albon mix is sent home with young pups to be dispensed as: ___cc daily for ___days.
Thank you for caring…all adoption monies go for food, care, and veterinarian expenses for the animals.
If you have questions, problems, or comments, please feel free to contact:
SALLY at this email: gnsives@aol.com

Printed Signature Brenda Shoss Phone 314-863-9445 DL#
Address 7380 Kingsbury Blvd. City St. Louis State MO Zip 63130
Pickup date __/__/__ at the Arnold Petco (between 11 and 4), or Flawdogs or at:

Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) is common and dangerous is toy/small breed puppies. I have been made aware of most common symptoms and treatments by flawdogs staff:

FLAWDOGS a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation **DATE:** 10/7/10

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So in this world of the simple and odd,
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Weight: 3 lbs 12 oz

Bordatella 10/5/10 Panacur &DHPP: 1st (2nd) final: 10/5/10 Alter/Dental/Rabies 10/6/10
DOB/Age: 8/01/10 FINAL DHPP due: 10/26/10 (cheapest with veterinarians at Petco).
Rabies Tag# → New owner will be responsible for rabies vacc. @ 4-6 months of age. HW negative (SNAP Test)/preventative & topical flea last given: N/A/__
Adoption Donation: $ 250 Deposit: $___ Microchip#
An Albon mix is sent home with young pups to be dispensed as: 1 cc daily for 8 days.
Thank you for caring…all adoption monies go for food, care, and veterinarian expenses for the animals.
If you have questions, problems, or comments, please feel free to contact:
SALLY at this email: gnsives@aol.com

3/4 cc daily Ethel

Printed Signature Brenda Shoss Phone 314-863-9445 DL#
Address 7380 Kingsbury Blvd. City St. Louis State MO Zip 63130
Pickup date __/__/__ at the Arnold Petco (between 11 and 4), or Flawdogs or at:

Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) is common and dangerous is toy/small breed puppies. I have been made aware of most common symptoms and treatments by flawdogs staff:

Sat, 10/9/10 • To: Gnsives@aol.com Hi Sally, Hopefully you saw my note...and duh...I could not leave the Lhasa behind. Neither could Elijah. Shockingly, none of Grady's threats amounted to a hill of beans. So far he is eerily mellow. I am so glad I followed my gut and heart because otherwise I wouldn't be mom to this amazing pair. How do you want to handle the payment/papers for the Lhasa, whom we named Ethel (for my grandma)? Also, a question for the puppy expert: They are both eating heartily so far. They play, play, play...then collapse into immediate sleep. **I am a bit worried about Libby (beagle); she always shakes. I thought she was cold. But she shakes when warm.** Do pups just shake from fear, trepidation, anxiety? That's understandable for Libby. She is the more timid of the two amid so much new-ness. Should I worry about her heart, more serious issues? Thoughts? ...I think you probably knew I'd leave with the Lhasa girl. In fact, I think everyone knew except me! She is like that unplanned child that you love all the more. Let me know about her paperwork. Thank you so much! Brenda

Ethel & Libby, A Love Story

10/9/10: The love between Lhasa & Beagle brought me to my knees. Rescued around the same time, they shared pen and playtime at Flawdogs Adoption (the puppy mill rescue where I adopt…and one of the most amazing places on earth for second chances). Sally Ives, Flawdogs founder with a bottomless heart, knew I faced a dilemma. I'd come to bring home a beagle pup. But The Husband had warned: If you bring home more than 1 dog, I will drive her back to Flawdogs myself! We can't afford it and have too many animals already. 3 dogs + 3 cats would bring our total to 6 furkids.

Two months earlier, we'd buried beloved Cleveland – my Lhasa-Poodle mix who'd survived with terminal cancer for nearly two years before passing on July 30. We'd barely rolled up the floor tarps from Cleveland's incontinence and myriad medical problems. I sat at Flawdogs, paralyzed with indecision. Finally, around 6:00pm Sally and her family left for dinner. She let Elijah and I stay behind to make our decision. If we left with both dogs, fine. If not, she showed me where to pen the Lhasa Girl. By then the pups spooned ridiculously, continuous dog top to bottom. We're a package deal, a two-fer, ya know?

As the sun set over Flawdogs, we knew it was time to leave – with one or both. "Mom," Elijah, my 9-year old said, "We can't leave the Lhasa here without her best friend. We just can't do it." In a split second, clarity emerged. With my son and step-daughter, 17 (also consulted), plugging for the pair, I scooped them into my arms and fled!

Several hours later, as we pulled into our driveway – I expected the worse. I'd picked up BK veggie burgers on the way home. Grady, sitting on our patio, called out: "Where's my veggie burger?" I approached him with a brown-sack dinner hanging from my clenched teeth, and one puppy under each armpit. I deposited the bag in front of him and said, "Right here." He didn't yell. He didn't even roll his eyes. Instead, he melted (he'll never admit it). He couldn't speak, apparently overcome by The Cuteness. Then he watched them frolic with spastic energy in our yard. And the clincher: He grinned. Big time. I don't know if Grady caved due to love and acceptance that animals are my life…or he just surrendered. Either way, the babies are home.

The beagle is LIBERTY (Libby) a salute to freedom for millions of beagles killed in animal testing labs each year. The lhasa is ETHEL, for my beloved Grandma Ethel. Libby and Ethel, welcome home! Brenda

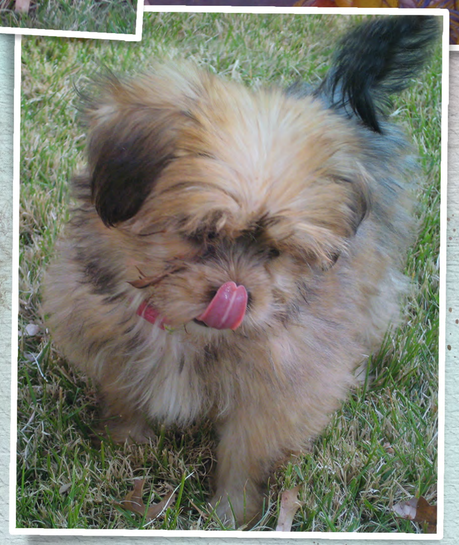
Ethel & Libby, A Love Story

Two Teeny Gumdrops, 2010 Oct-Nov: Libby and Ethel look like two live gumdrops in the grass. I wheel them around in a cat stroller. Don't know how I function amid this much cute. Libby, at 3 lbs, weighs a pound more than Ethel. Ethel is all hairdo.

Elijah: I still remember the day we picked them up...

Brenda: An epic story. You and I sit with the 2 gumdrops as the sun sets over Flawdogs. Sally goes out to dinner, leaves us to decide. Mandy is a wreck, hyper-salivating. But you, young lad, say words that finally push our feet into the car with Libby and Ethel: *Mom, you can't take one without the other.* At the time, the Tiny Two spoon atop that furry monkey bed at Flawdogs. Separation never occurs to them. They have us, at first sight.

Elijah: They sure did have us at first sight. They were so bonded.

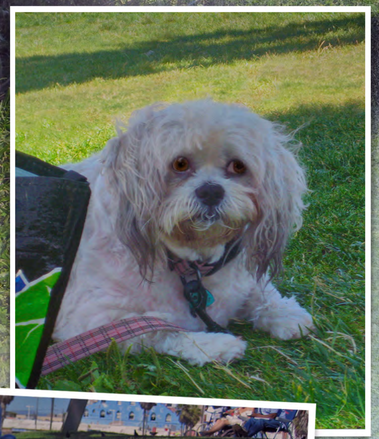


Spoon Sisters

No one spoons like Ethel and Libby, the original smash-up sisters. In sleep, at rest, in pause mode. A live current runs from one into the other. A pulse so strong, it transcends death. Ethel and Libby, perfect and teeny. Here, in this one moment. And the next. The next. The next... Then not. Taken.

Emily: OMG so tiny. Those luscious blond locks.
Brenda: Elijah is nearly as cute as Libby and Ethel!
Elijah: Almost! hehe. Can't beat those pups tho.
Brenda: Lethal cute. Stopped ya in your tracks...
Elijah: They were so cute.
Brenda: They were perfect.

Jul-Aug 2011, Venice Beach CA



Notes To Our Lost Baby Girl: There is nothing I can say to you that I have not already said everyday since Feb 2, 2012, except this: Each day I live with you. You are my eyes. My ears. My hands and legs…every part that is me, is you. You are my heart. My soul. What I cannot remember are your last few hours on this earth with me. It is black. An erased mark, absent. Did I hold you in bed, before I got up? Did I look at you with that love reserved for my most special baby girl? Did I promise you breakfast, walks and kisses? Did I tell you *I'll be right back?* Like I always did, every Thu. Because I was right back. And each reunion brought me to my knees. Literally. Rolling with you on the floor. Down on on all fours, you crawled underneath me. I was your little tent or canopy. Ethel, no one was more engaged in the business of living than you. It was evident in your bunny hops. Your prancey walk. And that bionic way you held air beneath you, with every jump.

What I've never done is tell you good bye. I don't know if I said good bye those last moments I saw you alive. I don't believe I can say good bye, even now. Ethel, you were here. All 1-and-a-half years of you. Here, Ethel. Your life is bigger than the universe to me. You are alive with me, sweet child, each day that I breathe. And Libby knows you were here, Ethel. You were Libby's warmth and spoon partner, nearly since birth. Two little mushrooms, barely taller than the the rocks and sticks around you. That's how I first laid eyes on you, with Liberty, at Flawdogs. Two teeny hearts already bound. There was never really a decision to make, though I sat with the two of you until after sundown. Elijah and I, on a hill, at Flawdogs. Until Elijah finally said: "Mom, you cannot take the beagle without the Lhasa. You cannot do that to them." **Because it was evident: Libby and Ethel were one. So home you came, the Unanticipated Lhasa. The golden girl. A miracle in our lives.**

Animal Rights Conference
2011, Los Angeles

Notes To Our Lost Baby Girl: How could a creature be so perfect? Golden like the sun. Tumbleweed, up and down our stairs with Libby. Inseparable at play. Inseparable when passed out puppies. One beating heart, the two of you. That's why Libby nearly died that day too. In fact, I thought of this much later. The look in Libby's eyes. The frantic, burn-into-your-soul way she seemed to plead with me: "Mom's home. She'll fix Ethel. She'll make Ethel get up. Mom! Please make Ethel get up. I can't wake her. Something is wrong! You always make us better. Please fix Ethel now." And when I could not, Libby vomited on the exact spot of pavement where you were killed. I tried Ethel. Oh, how I tried. I did not believe you could be dead. Impossible. You must be in a coma. You must be in a suspended state. If I can just get you to the animal emergency hospital, where you should have been taken within seconds of the hit… If I can just get you there now, we can bring you back. Breathe Ethel. Breathe. Breathe life. Gasp like you've emerged from water, from drowning. Gag and cough. Just wake up, please.

Open your eyes. An angel asleep. Your legs, back and belly are perfect. Silky gold fur. Open your eyes. You are in my lap. Wake up.

I tried to bring you back Ethel, because I knew the last thing you wanted to do was go. The last thing you expected was to end. To be, no more. Why did you run out that door? Did you think I was back home? Were you running away or toward something, someone? The shock and pain of hot metal smashing into you. Unimaginable. And I was not there to hold you, my angel. Libby and I, we rolled in your fur sometimes. And put it in our mouths. Your freshly cut fur, saved from a grooming appointment, still with energy. With light. As if it recently belonged to your living body. Still with your smell… Your breakfast bowl sits at my side, even now:

Ethel, forever unfinished. Here is your bowl, untouched since you last ate.
Please come home for breakfast and morning kisses. Make February 2 end. Come back to your mama…

Yanked From Our Lives & Your Own.
From your life with the girls, your pack – Libby, Mabel, Mandy. Yanked: From your family, your home. From me, my beautiful baby girl. Yanked From Your Own Life: Suddenly. Without reason. No rainbow bridges. No long illness. No good bye. Just taken. Gone.

Wed 9/1/21 12:51 am. FYI, both ER vet and Dr. Lynch agree that we'll know Libby's longer term prognosis in first 2 weeks of homecare. She either maintains or her kidney values shoot right back up. In 2nd scenario, there is no life-saving flush. It basically means she's done. So my guard remains very high, tho I can't wait to see her later today. Etelah will be so excited she'll walk across the floor on her stubby back legs like a performer doggie.
Cara: Cautiously optimistic may work here? Aw, Etelah.
Brenda: Grady and I imagine Libby is a soldier. When she squats to poop or pee, her body looks like an army tank. Sturdy. When she hunts cicadas or acorns, she's stalks and ambushes. She's fierce and strong. Praying she's strong now.

▼ **AR2011 Los Angeles, Scared Wittle Wibby.** Remember when I had to bring Libby on stage for the Awards Ceremony at AR conference (2011) in Los Angeles? Look at her wrinkly wittle face… • **Elijah:** Aww, she looks scared. What was the guy's name again? • **Brenda:** Alex Hershaft. Libby giving some seriously sad puppy crinkle eyes.

THE ORIGINAL 4*

2/1/12 Ethel's Last Day Alive. The Four, Ethel Addition: Libby, Ethel, Mandy, Mabel. We always wondered if Ethel were 100% Lhasa, cause she had such lovely long legs. In photos taken just a day before she was killed, she was already a bit taller than Libby – but very thin for a Lhasa, no potbelly.

We call Ethel Ms. Sassypants Super Model and Liberty, The Professor. She looks so focused and academic, like Snoopy in the role of The Red Baron, piloting his doghouse over rough terrain.

Command Sergeant Major Libby. Our strong, tank-to-the-ground rebound girl. She leads our platoon, with a Teflon stomach that ingests metal, paper, shoes, insects, wood, part of a bat. **Libby has the Strength of an Ox.** She tugs her harness into a limp rag. Your wrist and lower back are toast. Lean into The Pull. Dig heels into ground and bend knees (plie) to lower your center of gravity. To prevent orthopedic injury: Ride The Pull. Libby's on a Nose Sprint. It must run its course.

Sat 5/14/22 9:32am AFTER LIBBY: So many things in this house are Libby-fied: Cat-latch on litterbox door (doo doo eater), trashcans on counters (dumpster diver), gate blocks (fight instigator), cat food dishes high and pushed back (sideways serpent tongue), doggie steps to get on bed… Every time I clean or reposition these items, my brain goes: Libby is not here. The beagle is gone. How can that be? 💔
Elijah: I miss her too.
Emily: ☹️☹️❤️ I'm sorry:(It'll get easier as more time goes by.

2/1/12 SECRETS. When there were four... Ethel was usually busy nibbling on Libby's ears. Sharing Secrets: Ethel whispers puppy stuff to Libs Schwibbs.

2/2/12 · Subject: Dead. My 1-year old Lhasa-poodle mix was smashed by a car this morning. I was not here, or would have administered CPR immediately. She ran out while Grady and Elijah were here. I don't know any more details. I cannot bear them. Or light. Or being awake. Kinship Circle is suspended for at least the next week. I'll be in drug-induced sleep. I don't know what will be after that. I came home from early morning class to feed my Ethel, Mabel, Mandy, Libby and walk them as I do. But Ethel is dead. I cannot find her anywhere. She is one and half years old. I am confused and in a deep state of shock. Brenda

2/2/12 I don't miss her yet. I am looking for her. Sometimes you harbor a guilt about *loving one more than the others*. It really isn't your fault. Blame it on The One who is so ridiculously unique, quirky, fascinating. She folds into your arms like a new born infant, front legs draped around your neck, belly on your chest. She falls asleep with her head on your shoulder, unusually warm. Butter melting over your heart. You rock her, say her name...and question your sanity: Can I possibly love anyone else this much? My son? My husband? My other animals, each of whom I'd block a moving car, train or attacker to save? I am guilty. So I save her for last, after loving the others. To steal our moments together.

Ethel is The One. Ethel Jolene Sassypants Super Model. The puppy mill told her rescuers she's purebred Lhasa Apso. But no Lhasa has Ethel's high butt and long, shapely legs. Lhasas are pot-bellied pigs with fur. Bionic Ethel: She jumps from still positions, like a cat, and glides over beds, tables, other dogs...even Mabel, a good head taller. She swims in a river against a current that sends my beagle Libby running ashore.

2/2/12 Ethel is fearless. An opportunist. When I lie on the floor with Mandy, Mabel or Liberty in full-length sprawl over my belly. Ethel climbs into the teeny the space between the other dog's head and my chin. When I kneel on all fours to wipe away a kitchen mess, Ethel crawls between my legs to emerge under my chin, then settles contentedly with my torso as her tent. I quietly tiptoe downstairs to grab some coffee while working. Ethel follows. She nestles on a back door mat. And watches. The Lhasa stare. That much of her is vintage Lhasa: An unflinching human gaze. (Or, perhaps we humans just gaze like Lhasas?)

I am looking for Ethel. My husband tells me she bolted out an open back door into the street. Lhasas don't bolt. Beagles do. My husband tells me a car smashed into her; sent her perfect, golden body into the air. My son tells me she stood up after the hit.

I am not there. I am teaching a class. I return to feed dogs and get my morning kisses. Ethel is wrapped in a blanket on our patio. Are these people insane? I start CPR and rush her to the Animal Emergency Hospital. I force them to do CPR. I bring her home and my vet takes her until I get a headstone.

But I am still looking for her. I awaken each few hours and shout: *Ethel, come to Mommy.* I ask Grady and my son: *Is Ethel is upstairs? Is she with Libby,* her soulmate, born a day apart at the same puppy mill? Libby and I both roam the house looking for Ethel.

Ethel is 1.5 years old. Golden. Silky ears and tails. A Lhasa's moon eyes. A poodle's long muscular legs. She's never been sick a day in her life. Yesterday and today are days like any other. Ethel should be here. I am looking for Ethel.

Fri, 10 Feb 2012 • To: Dr. Kim Lynch • Post-mortem DNA swab to find out Ethel's mix. I am determined, fueled by grief, to find a girl baby as close to Ethel as possible. I Googled hybrids called *Lhatese* because I know she's mainly Lhasa, and seems to have Maltese. But she also may have poodle, a Lhasa-Maltese-Poodle mix? All guessing, based on her attributes and photos. I still want to do a post-mortem DNA test. I have tons of Ethel's fur. Had Rose save me clippings from her first grooming, along with a few pathetic snips from her tail before Tim picked her up. But I think these labs need an inside-mouth swab. Can you still do this, even though she is without life? Must be my continual stream of valium that is letting me type these morbid words, but I really want an idea of what she might have been.

I am in so much pain, as is Libby. The other day, I took out a ball of Ethel's hair from her first groom. Here's what Libby did: She pounced on it. She rolled in it. She played with it. Tossed Ethel's fur puff like a ball. And then finally, she ate it. Libby needs an Ethel-like baby girl badly. And so do I.

2/11/12. Ethel was my most special. Everyone here feels the loss of her light, energy and wonder. The three surviving dogs don't know how to play. Mabel and Liberty, do not like each other; we've had to break up some vicious attacks. Ethel had diffused this, as the first to befriend Mabel. Libby watched her, to rate where Mabel fit in the pack. Now Ethel is dead and Libby seems even more hostile toward Mabel.

My vet (we're close) advised we get another puppy for Libby (barely a year old herself) ASAP. I am looking for whatever Ethel was. A Lhasa-Maltese? A Lhasa-Maltese-Poodle? I can't help myself this time. The grief is just too all consuming. I have to adopt a baby girl like Ethel. Ironically, I just adopted Mabel, the scrappiest (most loving) Soi-street mutt from Thailand. But for Liberty and me: We're looking for someone like Ethel.

Tue, Feb 14, 2012 at 7:07pm. Sally Ives (FlawDogs) wrote this to me after Ethel was killed. Now I find myself in the same emotional desert, without Libby this time: *You know you will NEVER find another Ethel. You already had one. Your next baby will be a whole different trip. She'll wrap her little paws around your broken heart and mend it beyond anything you can imagine. Time (and a new baby) will, once again, remind you of the resilience of the human spirit.*

6/8/12 • Dear Cara, Random thoughts: Did she poop that morning a final time? Did I give a favorite treat and dinner for her last meal alive? I see my terrified girl wanting a do-over, not ready to leave. I just want to play! Where's my mom!? I see Ethel in everything. Unfinished. I used to sneak Ethel into the basement, to lay with her, do kisses, cradle her on my chest. I didn't want the others jealous (even Elijah and Grady!) I just loved her so much. She was the Unexpected Lhasa, an unplanned child who came home with Liberty. She was special from the start. Sunlight on water.

She comes to me, pleading. Stuck at Thursday, February 2, 2012. Not able to grasp why she can't come inside, play with Libby, have breakfast, morning walks...and get on with her day. And I am stuck there with her, my little baby who knew she was so special.

Ethel Jolene Sassypants Shoss-Ballard
Born: July 29, 2010 – Killed: February 2, 2012

Today the sky weeps, Ash-colored rain outside my window.

A long drought concedes. And water falls from my soul.

Today is July 29, 2012.
She would have been 2 years old. Today is Ethel's birthday.

Dear Ethel,

I was gone just an hour. A Thursday
morning, like any other. I would be right
back, to feed and play with my girls.

You weren't supposed to end,
And probably understood that
in your last moment...
When hot rubber and metal smashed into you.
You stood right up.
A reflex.

But you were broken,
Swept into a red current.
Your screams were stuck in the blood
That gushed off-course...
Drowning you.

Wait!
You are not supposed to end.
You run faster than anyone, even Libby.
You skim earth's surface.
You are strength of light,
Clarity and brightness.

Stop.
You are not supposed to end.
You want to cry, an endless note:
I am here, still.

But your voice is soundless,
Behind the wind.
Your eyes are terror,
The deepest place in a river,
Where water runs slowly.
You are dying.

Please. You are not supposed to end.
You come inside. Play with Libby.
Diva your way through breakfast,
And marvel at the wonder of worms and twigs.

Make February 2, 2012 stop.
Come home to me,
So my hands can lift you from the street.
My arms hold you.
My breath passes into you,
And my compressions give you a pulse.

Come home to me,
So you are present tense.
Warmth and stillness between us.
Two heartbeats, not one.

Beautiful girl with sunlit fur.
Brown eyes as wide as the earth,
And puppy kisses as soft as grass.

My body aches where you once were:
In my lap at work,
My arms at bedtime,
Tangled together at play.

One and a half years old,
Forever unfinished.

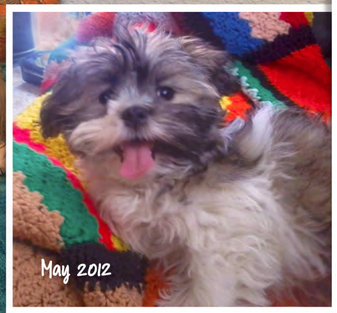
Your breakfast bowl waits untouched
since you last ate.
I love you most. Always.

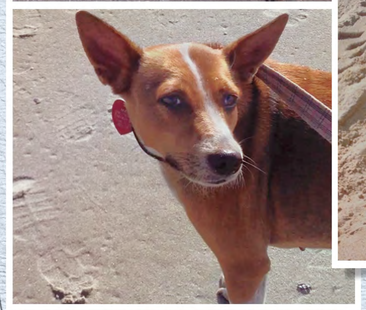
Ethel, you weren't
supposed to end.

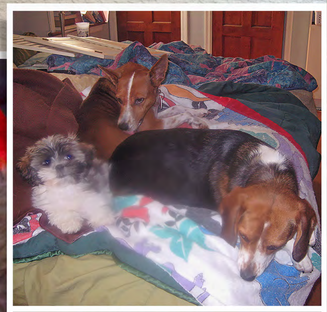
THE ETELAH 4*

2012 May, The Four ~ Puppy Addition

Mandy, Libby, Etelah-Puppy, Mabel. The day we adopt Etelah, we take Mandy, Mabel and Libby along for the drive to Wichita, KS. On the way home, dead of night, teeny Etelah lays nestled in my lap. Libby climbs from back seat, over comforters and other dogs, to wedge herself in my lap – underneath Etelah! I spend the drive home with a Lhasa-Beagle sandwich in my lap. From that drive to now, Libby and Etelah live as a team. Libby seems to understand that Etelah's adoption is as much for her as me, in our shared grief over Ethel.







Friends For Life, Till Libby's Last Breath. 4/16/12: Last night, Libby (my beagle) and Etel played for real – full length room runs, tumbles attached to each other, rope toy tug-of-wars. I have not seen Libby this happy since Ethel died. She seems to get it that Etelah is a baby, because she played a little more gently than she does with my older Lhasa Mandy. Grady and I could not stop laughing at the sight of the little puffball chasing a full grown beagle. Like Ethel, little Etelah appears utterly fearless.

Wed 5/11/22 9:24am AFTER LIBBY: Puppy is so lost. At night, when every pack member (humans, cats included) are in one room on 2nd floor to watch TV, she wanders downstairs to curl up in Libby's old spots – like kitchen dog bed in this photo.
Cara: Aw, that's so sad. Poor girl. She's grieving. 💔
Brenda: Breaks my heart,. I swaddle her in blankie and carry her back up to stay in my lap.
Cara: Maybe try that bed upstairs? She likely feels comforted by the smell of Libby still on it.
Brenda: I have Libby's last blankies lining her usual upstairs spots, but maybe? We think she likes to stay by the back door, just in case Libby comes home.

Tue 5/3/22 1:15am, AFTER LIBBY. This is heartbreaking. Puppy is very depressed over Libby. The only way I can get her to sleep alongside me is if I lay out this white furry blanket for her – the blanket we swaddle around Libby when we rush her to VSS. In critical care, Libby survives her first heart attack, but succumbs to congestive heart failure the second time. The blanket returns home, without Libby.

Animal Rights conference 2012

In the animal rights world, Libby is a Rock Star – the soulful beagle with star lit brown eyes. The dog who stares through bars atop concrete floors. Barren, cold, hopeless worlds. Grabbed, tossed, slapped. Overdosed, burned, injected. A model for human disease? Bullshit. Her smashed bones are not ours. Her vomit and pain are not ours. Her artificially induced cancer, nicotine inhalation and drug poisoning are not ours. The willing beagle. Each time Libby smiles and turns her head so I can brush each tooth, I mourn for millions of Good Girls who perish in animal experimentation labs.

DOGGIES join demo

Aug 2012 Washington DC ~ Kinship Circle members join a national protest against Patton Boggs, the top U.S. lobbyist for Air France. Activists urge PB to cut ties with Air France – a last hold-out among airlines that still profits from animal agony.

Though primate studies fail to produce clinical symptoms or data relevant to human disease, they are stolen from trees. Stuffed into mesh sacks and tossed into boats. Some are bred inside concrete farms. Animals packed in crates fly inside a plane's dark, airless cargo hold below unwary travelers.

They enter a world bound by metal bars, pain and fear. Primates are induced with human disease and injury. Experimenters poison, overdose, mutilate. Electrodes are lodged in exposed brain matter. Seizures are stimulated. Limbs removed. Still, we're no closer to cures for infectious disease, AIDS, neurological disease (Alzheimer's, Parkinson's)...

Mandy, Libby, Etelah and Mabel are diligent soldiers in the fight, marching with their family. Liberty Belle symbolizes beagles, commonly used dogs in labs.

Aug 2012
Washington DC

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Wed 9/1/21 10:15am Brenda: We really want to take the dogs on at least one last Big Adventure together. The road trip they love most occurs on the way home from a DC conference. We rent a house in Myrtle Beach, SC. with a huge deck and a stone's throw from the ocean. Very nature-y beach, not commercial like a Miami Beach. The dogs are in heaven. Before Libby gets sick, Grady and I discuss another beach house adventure, on an Elijah visit or bring-home (like Spring break). I hope we can do this with Ms. Liberty Belle. • **Cara:** That sounds lovely. I hope you can do that too.

Floppy, Fluffy & Pointy

Libby, Etelah, Mabel. Aligned in front of me, on Adventure Walks. Mabel twirls, a double air toure. She's an exhilarated ballerina as we cross streets, extend boundaries, embark on The Walk. Libby is nose-to-ground. A zigzag force of nature, forever entangling the leads, choking off my wrist, wrenching my lower back. It *never* occurs to Libby that she won't catch that squirrel, bird or bunny. Even as critters scurry up trees, inside deep grasses, overhead in the sky. Libby is puff-chested and proud, right behind them, if not for my grip on her leash. Puppy is alongside Libby, a Beagle Wannabe, imitating Libby's every move: If Libs marks a spot, Etelah lines up to pee right after her. If Libby rolls in luxurious rabbit or goose poop, Puppy is there too – belly-up, legs flailing, and wriggling joyously.

Aug 2012

The Libby Drop & Roll

6/2013 Animal Rights Conference + Outer Banks, North Carolina

You walk at a brisk, if veering pace. Until suddenly you do not. You've come to a dead stop. One of The Leashed no longer moves. Libby, of course. Mystery scents are hidden in green folds – another's poop, insects un-hibernating, ancient pee of other dogs, discarded food, damp leaves and sticks… The smells command Libby to:

1) Burrow nose in dirt. • 2) Drop to ground.
3) Roll over, belly-up • 4) Wriggle profoundly.
5) Flail legs skyward. • 6) Do Dance Of Joy squirm-fest.

Aug 2013: Libby's on point for a Beagle Power Coup.

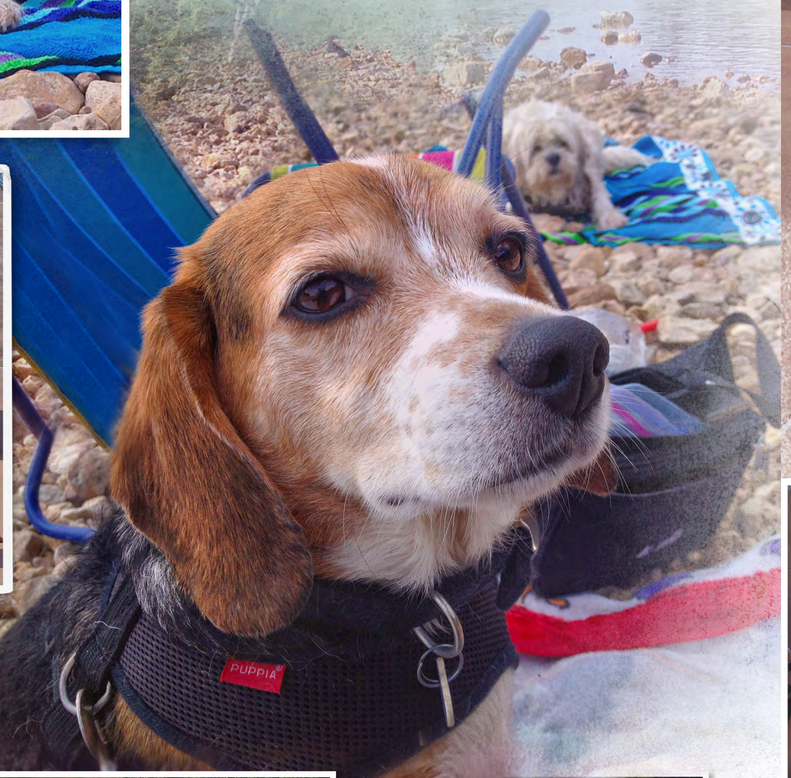
8/2013 Outer Banks, NC

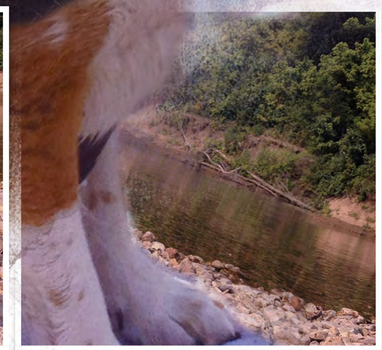
8/27/21 9:00am LIBBY IS TEFLON; SHE DOESN'T DIE: My hope for Libby fades. Her creatinine/BUN haven't budged. Zero response to fluids. She refuses all food. Get ultrasound data after 3:00. ER vet not as optimistic as Dr. Whiting yesterday. She feels Libby has chronic kidney disease or permanent kidney damage. She said Libby might not respond to inpatient IV flush. Even Isaiah rallied before his heart attack. I've never had to bury two in one year. We began year with four dogs. Etelah has elevated liver enzymes. I need to know if Libby will die in next week(s) before I can deal with Puppy. Will Etelah die too? • **Elijah:** Sorry mom, that sucks

Brenda: I feel like I am floating. I haven't grieved Mandy. Haven't reviewed her hundreds of photos to write her final marker or memory book. The thought of burying two in same year is paralyzing. I cannot imagine Etelah living without Libby, right after Mandy left. Our animal world is falling to pieces… ***Libby is the other half of Ethel's heart. Nothing seems real right now.***

Camp Taum Sauk

8/2014 On Black River At Camp Taum Sauk > Etelah and Mandy are the swimmers. If I walk up-river to ride the current back: Boom, boom! Four cartoon moon eyes splash after me. Soaked and swift, they move as one creature. Lhasa Otters, paddling cross-current. Two soggy heads afloat. The hounds? Not so much. Libby fears submersion. She prefers beachside watch as Command Sergeant Major Libby. Try to hold her for a swim, she goes squirmy and tugs toward shore. Mabel is tentative, dabbles at shorelines. Sometimes she spash-twirls in shallow waters. But the Lhasas? Splash. Paddle. Burn. Mandy loves to let tides lap over her squishy, warm body. Waddle, waddle plop. This is the life. Give her a shoreline, she's all in.





Thu 8/26/21 9:43am When Libby's End Begins
We just learned Libby is in complete kidney failure, like Isaiah. Grady will be here shortly to drive to VSS hospital with us. I will go to her everyday, because Isaiah died while in kidney treatment there… Dad and I are now in VSS parking lot waiting for doc to see and admit Libby. Cuz of covid, we can't even go inside or visit her while here. A nightmare. Libby was shaking so hard at vet tech handoff by door I had to pick her up and pass her to tech. Most scared I've ever seen her.
Elijah: :/ That doesn't sound good.

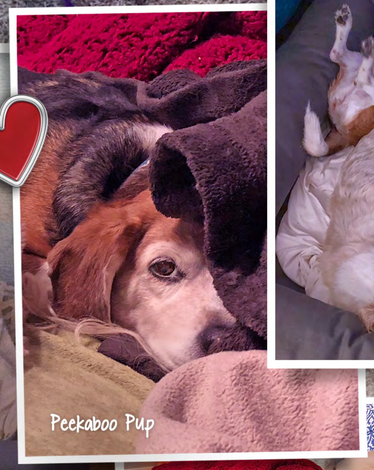
Brenda: Libby's phosphorus is supposed to be 1.6 but she has 18. Creatinine is normally around 1; Libby's creatinine is 8! She is really really sick. A total kidney failure, walking. Something more deadly than ingestion of cicadas alone.
Elijah: How the hell did that happen? • **Brenda:** I just don't know. She's gonna die before I bury Mandy. I'm very scared. I don't know anything till they start diagnosis.

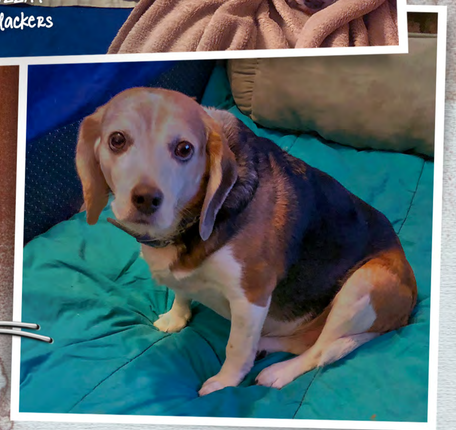
LIBBY'S SPHINCTER = DONALD TRUMP'S MOUTH

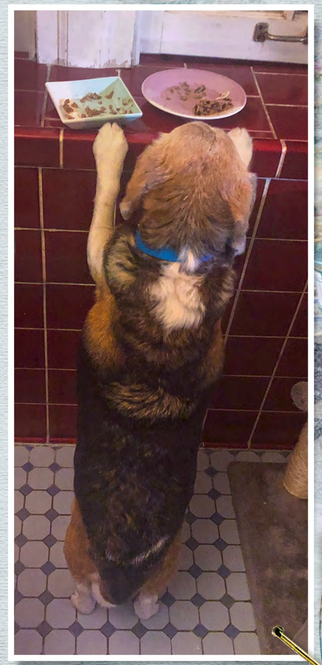
At some point during the reign of The Orange Dotard, Grady and I note that sweet Libby's bulging sphincter (when she tank-drops to poop) looks familiar. Ah! That's it. Libby's activated sphincter looks just like Orangetard's pursed little puffy lips when he's in beady-eyed mode berating others. We find comfort in the fact that the most moronic, bigoted, fascist president in history resembles a dog's asshole.

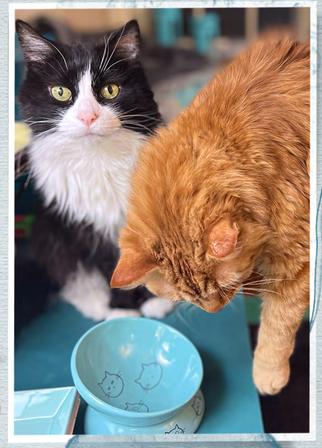
LIBBY SLEEP STYLE = PRAYING MANTIS, FROG

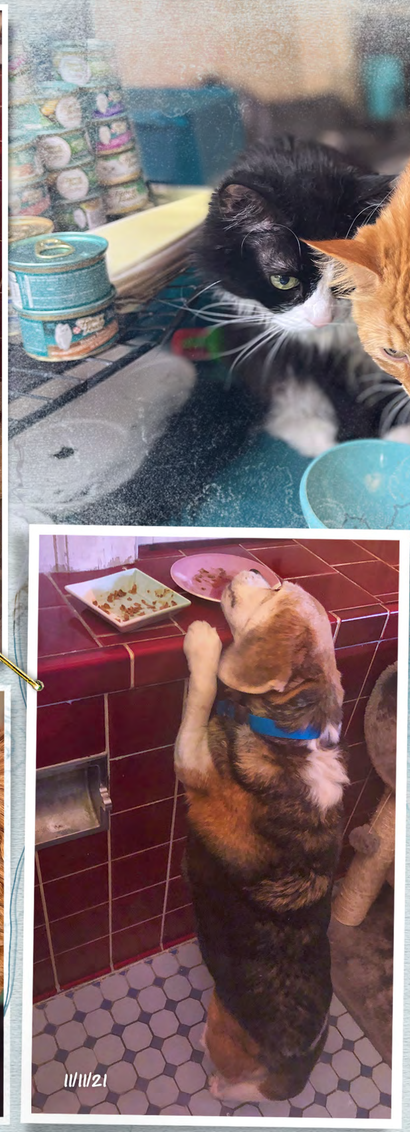
When The Libster sacks out, the belly goes up. Back legs splay apart like a frog with no bony joints. Front legs fold at the "wrist," in the Praying Mantis Dangle. Ears are tossed inside-out. Omigod. Is she posing for us? Just really comfortable? We're mesmerized. Wibby is also the Peekabo Puppy who loves to burrow beaneath blankets. If a pile of bedcovers starts walking, it's Libby.











Operation cat food

Projectile Lizard Tongue

Step #1: Follow nose to food dish at high altitude on table, counter or desk.

Step #2: Stand on hind legs with front legs clamped atop surface where food plate resides. Prepare to Counter Surf.

Step #3 Impact Assessment: How can my tongue influence the current situation?

Step #4 Trajectory: Tongue detects GPS coordinates for cat (or human) food. Tongue extends length required to drag dish off counter, sill, table or desk.

Step #5 Lizard Tongue: In diverse environments, a sideways, projectile tongue may be launched to loop around food plate and move it within beagle range.

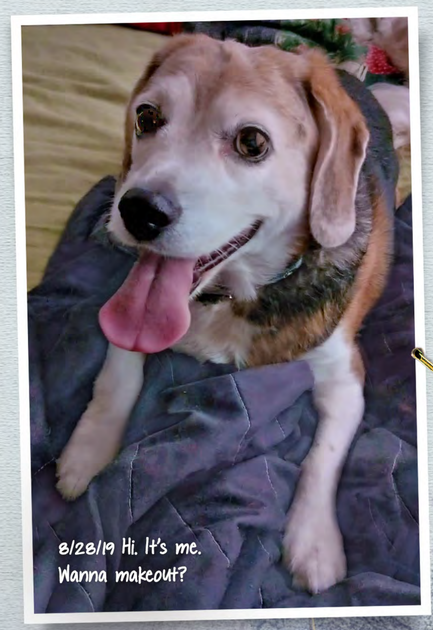
Step #6: Gulp down food. Cat food, baby. And mom's dinner.

Mission cat poop

Litter Box Invader • Cicada Cruncher

Libby's utmost mission: To protect and serve as Our Sentinel. She perches in the cat tree, or art dish, to bark/howl at each passing dog, human or wild critter.

Feline Tootsie Pops. Libs gotta get 'em. We battle lifelong litter loots – until we find a simple door-strap from Chewy that bars beagles. During her glory days, Libby turbos over boards and gates to steal sandy turds. To eat (beagle delicacy?) or deposit elsewhere. And it's a pyramid scheme! We find Etelah atop the litter box. Mabel invades too. But no one gulps cat poop with more gusto than The Libster. "Libby ate cat craaaap again," Grady grumbles. In fact, the more putrid the item, the more Libs loves it. To our dismay, she also gulps cicadas. Crunchy shells + still-alive juicy bugs. Gross! As she ages, cicada digestion harms her pancreas and kidneys. But even after gastritis bouts, she can't resist. The lure of the meaty insect beckons. We try muzzles. She wiggles out of them every time. Finally, the double-loop leash lets us pull her snout off the ground. But she's like a crack addict during cicada season.



GB & The Libby Laydown

Libby climbs up the doggie steps to reach our bed. Plod, plod, plod. We see a beagle head top, then her profile, followed by the rest of her. "Howdy neighbor," we greet her, "thanks for stopping by." Libby beelines for Grady, who lays chest-up flat on the right side of the bed. Her ascent begins between Grady's legs. She drag-pulls herself flat atop Grady – her face at Grady's mouth and chin, her legs splayed out like a frog over Grady's quads. Let the licking begin! It's a make-out fest. Grady squints and purses his lips. Libby, undeterred, licks on… Until Grady lets her know: "Okay, we're good."

Isaiah 3/2/03 - 11/15/19

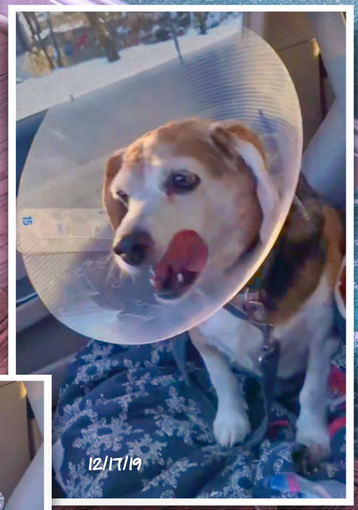
11/15/19 11:58am Brenda: Mandy turns 15 on 2/2/20. Isaiah, spirits willing, turns 17 on 3/2/20. Stanley, Cleveland and Ethel didn't make it to 13 yrs. So each next-day we get with Mandy and Sai is precious.
Elijah: Pretty damn amazing, Can't wait to come home and see them!

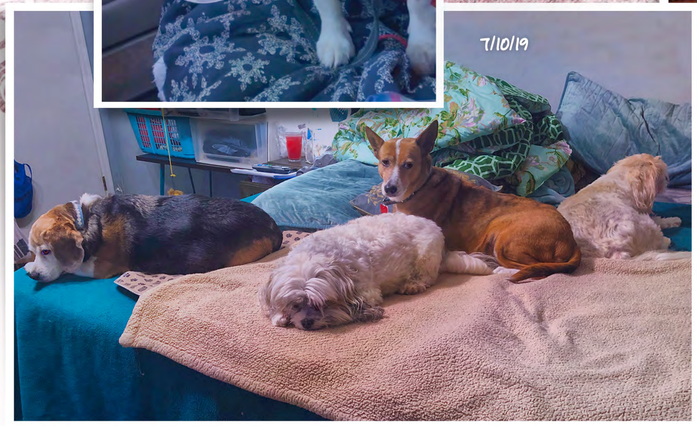
Isaiah, Sai-Sai, Big Orange Cat literally dies later this same day – cardiac arrest while at VSS for kidney disease, with creatinine dropping and plans to bring him home. I am in shock...

Rebekkah 6/20/98 - 11/1/15

Nov 16 2019 • Solidarity Survivors band together after Isaiah is gone.

More Hound Battles. More Vet ER.





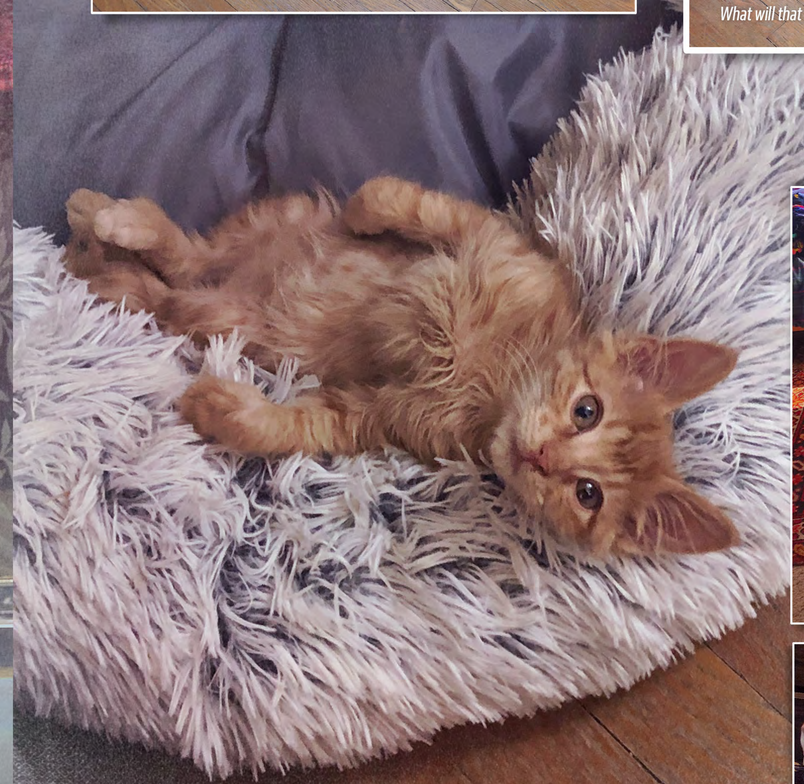
12/17/19 12:36pm, EAR STITCHES. *2019 marks the onset of more Libby/Mabel death-fights. Until the final fight in 2022 that leads to Libby's death.* Gratefully, Elijah took Libby to Kirkwood Animal Emergency. We hope she'll only require a single stitch or vet glue to hold her ear together and stop bleeding. I used kwikstop, pressure and ice – but could not stop blood at home. Big globs all over. Tried best to clean up. Mabel is downstairs. She was not injured in fight. I hope your wrist is okay... Sorry Grady. I am trying to coordinate this for Elijah/Libby via phone and that was Elijah calling from Kirkwood hospital. This scares me about Libby/Mabel fights: Libby had puncture wounds on head top, chin, and the ear tears. The bad ear tear required 2 stitches top side and under-side because a vein was torn. Libby coming home in hood. She gets antibiotic for 10 days + 3-day Rimadyl for pain (we must secure Rimadyl where she can't pull it off counter; remember the Rimadyl Incident: Libby eats open the bottle + all dogs stomachs must get pumped). Sutures removed in 10-14 days. She may still bleed, even with sutures cuz vein ripped in thin skin. She must stay hooded till sutures out.

This cat fully flattens to squeeze behind a desk less than 1" from wall. Springs from the bed to my shoulder, steals a brussel sprout off my plate, bolts. So far, Libby is nicest. Mandy snaps if Booker gets in her face. Libby mostly trots after Books.

12/1/19 10:39pm: A meeting of the minds.
Elijah: So cute. • **Grady:** What r they talking about?

I can't say that any relationships have blossomed yet (as of 12/1/19), but Libby is nicest. Mandy snaps if Booker moves in on her nose. Libby mostly trots after Books, then smells all his stuff in bathroom.

3/11/20: Look at Libby! She seems fascinated by Booker T. Cookie. *What will that small orange creature do next?*



4/10/20
Moochers

12/1/19

11/27/19: Lij meets Booker, 1st time.

In the dark halfway, where Isaiah lives though gone, introducing:

Mr. Booker T. Cookie

That's Booker T. with a capital T!
Widiculously wittle and humowous.
The Orange Legacy carries on.

1/5/20

VSS VETERINARY SPECIALTY SERVICES
Referral and 24 Hour Emergency Service

VSS-Manchester
1021 Howard George Drive
Manchester, Missouri, 63021
Ph: (636) 227-9400
Fax: (636) 527-0812
Email: reception@vssstl.com
Emergency: (636) 227-6100

Client Details

Name	Shoss & Ballard, Brenda & Graydon	**Phone**	(314) 401-0233 (314) 795-2646
Address	7380 Kingsbury Blvd Saint Louis, MO, 63130		

Patient Details

Name	Mabel	**Age**	11 years 8 months
Species	Canine	**Sex**	Female Spayed
Breed	Mixed Breed	**Referral**	Dr Lynch, Kim - Kim Lynch Dvm Cva

History

02-17-2020 10:25:45am, *Dr. Blake Sutton*

Mabel is a 9.5 yr FS MBD who was presented for evaluation after being attacked by a house mate over the weekend and finding of an incidental abdominal mass. Mabel was originally seen at AEC on Saturday night after she was attacked by a house mate. Radiographs revealed a left coxofemoral luxation, a large left sided abdominal mass (possibly spleen in origin), and concern for a potential body wall hernia. Thoracic radiographs were unremarkable with no evidence of pulmonary metastasis. Bloodwork revealed a mild azotemia (BUN 29, Cre 1.3) and elevated ALP. Urinalysis revealed moderately concentrated (USG 1.034). A CBC was unremarkable.
The owner declined recommended abdominal explore and elected for outpatient treatment.
Since going home Mabel has been notably uncomfortable and is having difficulty lying down.
Mabel has been in fights previously with the same house mate but has not sustained trauma to this extent previous. Mabel has a history of a chronic left hip luxation. The owner reports that consultation when Mabel was young with Dr. Anderson resulted in the recommendation of monitoring.
Mabel is currently on tramadol (75 mg PO q12h) and no other medications.

DIAGNOSIS:
Suspect urinary bladder herniation in the left peroneal region.
Appearance of left kidney is most consistent with severe hydronephrosis and hydroureter, most likely secondary to obstruction, may be associated with this place bladder, or unidentified obstruction within the pelvic canal.
DesChene Brochtrup, DVM, DACVR

Therapeutic / Procedure

02-17-2020 5:54:08pm, *Dr. Wes Kimberlin*
Hernia Perineal (1)
Specifics

Procedure: Perineal herniorrhaphy,left

Histopathology: no

Suture Material: 2-0 prolene in fascia; 2-0 PDS in SQ/SC; 3-0 nylon in skin

Description: The perineum was clipped and prepared for aseptic surgery. The left hernia was approached via an incision directly over it. The hernia contained fat. An internal obturator flap was developed using blunt and sharp periosteal elevation. The flap was sutured to the anal sphincter muscle medially and to the coccygeus and sacrotuberous ligament laterally. The surgical site was lavaged and closed in layers over a Penrose drain. Post-operatively, an Elizabethan collar was placed.

2/14/20, The Horrific Fight That Saves Mabel's Life.

In the endless seconds we can't unclamp their death-grip jaws – our minds already calculate the cost. How much blood? Who will go to vet ER? Once pulled apart, I scream to Grady: Check Mabel for blood! I lift Libby's ears, inspect eyes, joints, paws, belly. This time, Libby has superficial wounds I can treat. Mabel? No blood, GB says. But later that night, she cannot move or lay comfortably. A pouch of skin distends from her abdomen, swollen and abnormal. Grady doesn't want vet bills, so always says they'll be fine. But by 2:00am, Mabel is clearly not fine so Grady takes her Animal Emergency Hospital in Kirkwood. They're just vet interns; think it's a hernia, but also find "tumorous" area on kidney. We bring Mabel home with plans to admit her to VSS asap. *The fight that saved Mabel's life?* Mabel has a dead, necrotic left kidney. Her bladder has slipped from its normal location down her rear, choking off her ureter... I cannot imagine the pain Mabel has stoically endured as a kidney died and her bladder dislodged. We wouldn't have known, if not for the "fight injury" that brings us to VSS. I approve Perineal Hernia emergency surgery later the same day. They remove and analyze Mabel's swollen dead kidney. Treat bladder relocation site and move her bladder back into it's correct position.

9/11/20 Libby wears a Thunder Jacket to calm aggression: Fights with Mabel. The ambush of kiddens and Mandy Mind Melds (tho Mamoos stands her ground when caught in the Beagle Gloaming).

3/7/20 12:18pm: Spring break from AU 2020, just before Elijah and Liam must drive back to Emery in Atlanta and AU in DC to get all of their belongings. Colleges indefinitely closed for Covid-19 lockdowns. The 1.5 years of virtual class begin... **Brenda:** Elijah when is your flight? Now?
Elijah: I'm waiting for dad to pick me up :)
Brenda: You are in STL right NOW? So is Joe Biden, hahaha. Dogs are gonna go ballistic when you two get here. Remember: Libby and Mabel are separated. Mabel is currently upstairs, gated with me. Libby will be at door.

3/28/20 8:40pm,
Jason Brumitt <brumittj@gmail.com>
LIBBY - 3/30 9:30am VIS MOBILE
= Dr. Kim Lynch • 314-412-5069 Independent Mobile
= Spoede Animal Hospital • 314-569-3111 (w/ Dr. Lynch)
= DOG: Libby • Beagle female • 10-years old
Libby undergoes ultrasound and exam to rule out medicial condition as cause for her aggression.

We had bloodwork done to see if Libby has an underlying medical issue related to her increased aggression over the past year. Specifically, she's had lifelong issues with one dog in our home – Mabel, a 10-year old Basenji-mix female rescued in Bangkok, Thailand when my nonprofit charity, Kinship Circle, sent its Disaster Animal Response Team there for search-rescue during Thailand floods in 2012. Libby was born in a puppy mill; we rescued her with a fellow mill-mate, Ethel (Lhasa Apso). They were inseparable. Ethel was horribly killed in a car collision (I was not home at time) and Libby was deeply affected by this loss in 2012.

Since that tragedy, Libby instigated random and vicious fights with Mabel about 1-2 times a year. I've used gates, coast-guard SOS whistles, etc to break them up. (Libby starts the fights; Mabel is stronger). However, in just the past year, increased fights led to two ER episodes: the first for Libby ear stitches, the second for Mabel internal injuries. Libby's less grave aggressions (she humps our 15-year old Lhasa, chases our cats) have also increased, though without endangerment.

Dr. Lynch did blood work (you should have) that shows high ALP (not ALT) levels, possibly related to Libby's liver, gall bladder... Other than increased aggression, Libby has been asymptomatic – except for mucusy blood-color blobs in her stool, months ago. At that time, we connected this to new kibble in her diet. We stopped using that brand entirely, and the blood-blobs stopped.

Libby's appetite, energy per her age, and alertness are all normal. She had orthopedic knee surgery at VSS several years ago, but no other illness or major injury in her life. I hope you'll check for Cushing's or Atypical Cushing's (adrenal gland, pituitary gland/tumor) along with organs/systems indicated per Dr. Lynch and your team, in conjunction with Libby's recent blood work.

4/21/20 12:07am Brenda:
You know how dogs detect cancer, Parkinson's... in humans? Dogs are in training now to smell Covid19 in people! 🐶🐱 • **Grady:** Libby!
Brenda: Covid Sentinel.

8/11/20 10:42am
(Hindsight: Of Course, Libby):
If Mabel is pooping blood, her last remaining kidney is failing & she has less than month to live. DOG WALKERS: wake the hell up. Which dog is excreting rectal blood?? Otherwise, it's one of cats which means 100% cancer. Get off your phone/music. Look at each dog's poop!
Elijah: I am awake stop acting like I did something wrong. No dogs have blood in their poop, stop blaming it on me.
Brenda: Pls look for any blood in walks. Or poop on either cat butt/paws. Someone pooped 8 times, each bloody, on living room pad. Help me figure out who. No one take personally. I'm only alive to defend animals. Period. Dad cares about: money. He'll conceal blood to save $$. Elijah, help mom figure out whose bleeding badly.

8/12/20 4:40pm Libby Blood: If Libby (or any dog) eat *cicadas* (especially) or *acorns*, this causes gastritis: bloody stools, lethargy, vomit, anorexia...ER. Dr. Lynch words, not mine. She asked me to inform the main dog walkers here. Pls do everything possible to stop dogs (specially Libby) from eating cicadas or acorns.

9/8/20 12:46pm Thunderbolt Jacket
For Libs: I'm more proactive about hound aggression in our home. During Katrina + Japan Quake, Thunderbolt donated their comfort jackets to DART Teams, cause we dealt with so many aggressive, traumatized dogs. They work. I just got one for Libby + 1 for Mabel. I also got Thunderbolt spray (few spritzes on jacket + rooms where dogs are). The spray

will also help with Mandy bark breakouts. (Maybe Puppy?) Vet recommended and Kinship Circle used them on dogs in Japan.

Elijah: Also wear a bracelet or necklace attached to whistle so it's on u at all times.

Brenda: I have a necklace whistle. One reviewer said Thunderbolt spray works on her husband. Spray Grady when he gets gnarly?

Elijah: Then u should try to wear it more. I think that would've helped with the fight.

Brenda: Agreed on whistle.

Gary Yavitz cathealer@gmail.com
Sun 11/8/20 12:08pm • Dr Yavitz, beagle hurt just before my surgery

I'm supposed to be hospitalized for hip surgery in 2 days and under pre-op quarantine.

PAW CRUSHED > Our dogs Libby (beagle) and Mabel (Basenji-mix) FIGHT. It's random and infrequent, but when it happens they engage like illegal pit-bull fights with blood wounds, torn flesh, broken bones. We keep them gate-separated on different floors. They are both nearly 12. We won't "get rid of" an elderly family member.

This a.m. (Sun) they were triggered by a another big dog, while on walk with my husband Grady. They fought briefly before Grady and a neighbor could pull them apart. Mabel bit Libby's front left paw. I cleaned the area + hydrogen peroxide + Neosporin. There is a shallow laceration in ankle area. I believe Libby has an internal injury: broken/ dislocated bone or damaged soft tissue. Her back hindquarters shake and she pants for long stretches. She holds up the entire lower left leg, even when laying down. Because I'm quarantined with surgery in 2 days, we hope you can see her tomorrow (Mon 11/9). Thank you very much, Brenda Shoss 314-795-2646

Mon 11/9/20 6:41pm PAW CRUSHED > Dr. Yavitz, I can't thank you enough for seeing my precious Libby immediately – the day after she was injured. My animal kids have decided to test me, till the moment I undergo anesthesia myself on Wed! I was so worried about Libby I couldn't focus on anything else, let alone my own surgery. I am so grateful and relieved that Libby will be okay. Libby and I will limp around together for awhile. Grady has his work cut out for him, hahahaha. Thank you again! Brenda

11/9/20 10:34pm: Is Libby ok? • **Lij:** Yup. **Brenda:** My wuv for Wibby is as big as the sky.

1/6/21 1:01am Libby's Toxic Chocolate Snack & The White Insurrection

Brenda: If you discover your dog ate chocolate try to discern type, how much, and when eaten. Dark chocolate, baker's chocolate and cocoa powder are most toxic.

Elijah: She's in my room, looks fine.

Brenda: Symptoms emerge 4-24 hours after ingestion: Sickness, diarrhea (may contain blood) + restlessness, hyperactivity, rapid breathing, muscle tension, incoordination, increased heart rate and seizures. • **Elijah:** She's fine mom.

11:13am : I found 2 big hairballs (*not* from cats) alongside Libby's mouth this morning? Chocolate hairballs? Beagles! And by the way, DEMS WON the fucking Senate!!

1:16pm : Trump started a war. Nazi Morons stormed the Capital. The Senate coup was underway in terms of certifying Joe/Kamala. The Senate suddenly cut all audio and moved Mike Pence into basement bunker. Trump's Confederate War on America has begun...

3:43pm > Brenda: Second GA race called for Jon Ossoff! Chuck Schumer is now the Senate Leader. Adios Turtle Face

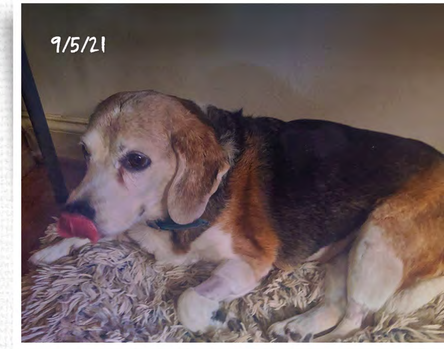
Elijah: yayyyyy! Hawley is Trump's apprentice!

Brenda: If that twerp still tries to coup Biden's certification (when Senate regathers) he is not just a loser, but should be charged with helping to incite today's insurrection.

Fri 1/10/21 6:24pm Brenda: I did not panic. Only the Cartoon-Mom inside your head panicked. I did what you or dad should do in any animal-ingestion scenario: 1) Call Animal Emergency Hospital 314-822-7600. 2) Calmly explain what dog/cat ate, give age/weight of animal. Answer their questions. I walked into basement, found a similar chocolate bar so we could guesstimate amount Libby ingested in relation to her weight. I got instructions what to watch for and when to call vet. If Libby had eaten more, we would've induced vomiting. If ate whole bar, we would've taken her to ER. Didn't have to do either. Facts always win the day, specially in emergencies.

Elijah: You are right. • **Grady:** Mom's always right.

3/24/21 8:44am: Mabel and Libby fought. Libby's ear is ripped apart and I cannot stop the bleeding. I do not know what to do. 1) They can not be in kitchen together. Get up early enuf to walk Mabel separately from Libby/Puppy. THEY CAN NEVER BE TOGETHER. 2) Libby needs a stitch and Dad's gonna leave...



Taken

3/29/21: Pics shot 1 month before Mandy dies. Libby is just 5 months out from the renal crisis + kidney disease that will take her too — less than 1 year after Mandy is gone.

She was born in a puppy mill,
raised on wobbly legs.
Full of worms and parasites.
Knew she had to be saved.
Mandy, sweet Mamoo.
Cutest girl I ever knew.
Mandy, sweet Mandroo.
Mama's in love with you.

Mandy MooMoo LuLu SuSu Girl:
You have us at your sideways glance.
Cartoon moons. A consummate stare.
Focus. Wit. Humor.

Our lives unfold across your miles.
Marriage, son, activists, family.
All roads converge at you.
Big squishy love pillow. Pal. Colleague.
My Jewish twin: Shaggy bangs, smokey Lhasa eye.

15 Windows: Firsts and Lasts.
You beat in our hearts. Live in our laughter.
Mandy Suzanne, we love you.

Mandy Suzanne Shoss-Ballard
2/25/06 - 5/20/21

5/23/21: Mandy, I didn't know. I didn't know. That I'd miss you this hard with jagged hurt. Choke tears. I'm okay. Then it hits. I don't even understand how deep this is. So many years and years. You are the base of this new life. As a mom. A wife (oh well on that one). My little Flaw Dog with the sideways glance. Everything feels better with you on the grass. Even when you eat your poop. A thing, apparently, that some puppies do. You are so funny. And human-like in expression. Your face is the most beautiful face I have ever known. You're are the most beautiful Lhasa I've had the honor to rescue and mommy. God, I love you so much I am terrified of what's about to open up inside me. Mandy Lu. Mommy's here. Mommy's here.

4 - 1 =
The Three

5/31/21 Downtown & Riverfront: Mandy is the first of the The Four to leave us. Our Grand Poobah, the pack's core who came to us after Stanley died. Mandy began with Cleveland. Mothered teeny Libby and Ethel. Survived Ethel's killing to mama-dog Etelah for all her days. She welcomed Mabel and lived alongside cats Rebekkah, Isaiah, Baby Noah and even Booker T. Now we are The Three for the first time in a decade. The space of Mandroo's abscence is too wide to endure. So we pack The Three in our car for day trips and adventures. We are deep in Days of Unknowing. Unknowing that Libby has already begun to die, only three months out from kidney failure. Unknowing that these teeny trips are her last. That she'll never road trip cross-country again. Or run, ears flying, along sunlit shores. Unknowing that the last of our Flawdogs, our Libby + Ethel, is almost gone too.

Libby's Last Trip

5/29/21: Uncle Rich *creek resort* in Gerald, MO. Libby is Nose On A Lead, barreling over scrappy terrain. Hopelessly tangled, caught in brush. Trampling our food. She has a blast!

Sat 8/21/21 5:30am When We Thought It Was Just Cicadas: Up all night with Libby. She vomited everywhere, repeatedly. Sometime after 4:30am she climbed outta bed and had explosive diarrhea that dripped from mat/floor, down steps and over wall on to first floor. I cleaned it best I could, but that's not point. *She is very sick*. I wish you were here.

Elijah: How is Libby now?

Brenda: Sorry I missed your call. Libby is 100% anorexic, a big deal for the dumpster diver. I had to half carry her up the steps. Cicadas can make a dog violently ill, attack the liver and land them in ER. Libby will fast today and Dr. Lynch said to give her Pepto Bismol caplets. If she still won't eat by Mon night, I'm taking her to Spoede Animal Hospital on Tue. Also, we have to get her a "Basket Muzzle" for walks during cicada-season. She can drink and breath okay, but can't move jaw around to chew. People may think she's a biting dog, but she can't eat cicadas and Dr. Lynch says dogs get addicted to them, like cocaine.

Sat 8/21/21 7:15pm: I had 0 sleep last night cuz Libby got violently ill from eating damn cicadas on walks. Some dogs are addicted to the putrid crunch like humans binge on chips. Diarrhea and vomit all over house. Now she's anorexic. Trying to avoid ER but if she won't eat by Mon night, she needs labs and vet care. So beware of cicadas on dog walks. Don't know if Bailey is interested in such gross delicacies, but they can permanently damage dogs' livers.

Cara: Yikes. That's awful. So sorry for Libby.

Sun 8/22/21 2:22pm: Libby is a bit better today. She was 100% anorexic yesterday and I had to carry her up steps. She was out of it cuz so sick. Today she nibbled a bit and her eyes aren't as dull and empty; some vibrance back. I hope she continues to recover without ER intervention. Those fucking cicadas are really toxic for dogs (who else would eat them?)

Cara: Glad Libby is doing better.

But Libs Is Teflon

Wed 8/25/21 1:16pm Cara: Hi. How's Libby?

Brenda: Really sick. Don't even know if cicadas. If it is from eating something toxic, she has pancreatitis that can take months to heal. We must rule out Big C, kidneys, liver... Pancreatitis is a default diagnosis if nothing else found. Get blood work results sometime tomorrow.

Cara: Hope she'll be ok.

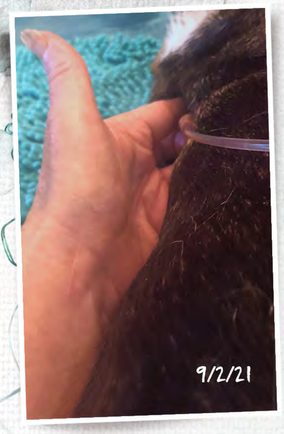
Thu 8/26/21 9:43am Libby is in complete kidney failure. Like Isaiah. Grady arrives shortly to drive to VSS with us. I will go to her everyday, because Isaiah died while in kidney treatment there. But Libby is 11 (Isaiah was 16). Kidney fail could be from cicadas, not systemic disease. Still she can easily die. I'm shaking so hard.

Cara: So sorry to hear that. I hope they can help her.

Thu 8/26/21 4:00pm: Lij, a bit of hopeful news re: Libby. We won't know for certain whether she has kidney cancer/disease till after tomorrow's ultrasound, but I prayed they'd find infection + bacteria in her urine. They did! Libby has severe bladder infection, with high bacteria count that's crept into her kidneys. This can cause plummeting kidney values that mimic kidney disease. If the infection is all they find, it's treatable with antibiotics and fluids. Infection is unrelated to cicadas; I've learned severe UTIs in dogs can do this. Pray to whatever you believe in that they don't find tumors or lymphoma in her bladder or kidneys tomorrow – and that all Libby has is infection.

Elijah: I am praying!

Brenda: Severe bladder infection, crawling with bad bacteria? Best bad news ever.



kidney disease for years, with terrible values like Libby + bouts of anorexia. She just keeps him on kidney support meds/food and he refuses to die. Libby's got tenacity. She's a determined girl. I am not giving up on Libby.
Elijah: Is she home so you can take a pic?.

Brenda: No, we brought her to ER yesterday and can't even visit cuz of Covid. I am hostage to my phone, waiting for emergency vets to call. I text you after each report. She just had ultrasound, which diagnosed kidney disease. The 3-5 day hospitalization is to get her kidney values closer to normal range. They're off the charts right now, poisoning her body. She was admitted with 8.0 creatinine! If fluid-flush (like doggie dialysis) helps, then she comes home for subQ fluids + support meds. But ER may say, after 5 days, "we can't bring her back" and send her home to die. I'll still try homecare. Dr. Lynch is with me on this, coming up with a care plan.

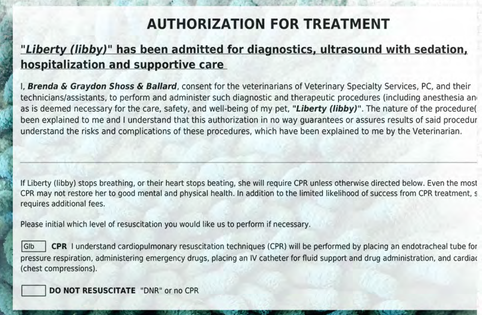
TO DR. LYNCH: Just got ultrasound results. Chronic kidney disease. Libby showed 0 symptoms till gastritis last Sat. Late 2020 kidney values + ultrasound = perfect. I can't wrap myself around this. Looking at sub-cu fluids 3-4x a day + meds till she dies in weeks, months, year. That's only if she responds to ER flush, which she hasn't so far. VSS said IV fluids might help kidney values when antibiotic kicks in (it hasn't yet).

- Ultrasound: Both kidneys shrunken. Can't distinguish b/t cortex & medulla.
- Kidney disease "several years." Bad values don't show till 75% failure.
- Stomach thickened, inflamed.
- Antibiotic (UNASYN) may help kidneys.
- Dr. Thompson said earlier records sent to you at noon; will now send ultrasound.

I won't give up on Libby. Pls think about her subQ plan (amount + times daily) as well as best support meds. Nearly 20 years since I gave Stanley that chalky Phosphate from human pharmacy. There's better stuff now. She rolled in grass and pulled me like an ox (on dog walk) on Fri, day before sudden onset symptoms. *I won't give up on Libby.*

Fri 8/27/21 8:48am: Libby can't die yet. Etelah can't live without her soul-mate.
Cara: Hoping she can hang on longer.
Elijah: do you have a picture of her?

Brenda: Seriously? I have hundreds of pics. I just spoke to Dr. Lynch. She has an American Eskimo who is now 13 and has had


AUTHORIZATION FOR TREATMENT

"*Liberty (libby)*" has been admitted for diagnostics, ultrasound with sedation, hospitalization and supportive care

I, ***Brenda & Graydon Shoss & Ballard***, consent for the veterinarians of Veterinary Specialty Services, PC, and their technicians/assistants, to perform and administer such diagnostic and therapeutic procedures (including anesthesia an as is deemed necessary for the care, safety, and well-being of my pet, "***Liberty (libby)***". The nature of the procedure(been explained to me and I understand that this authorization in no way guarantees or assures results of said procedur understand the risks and complications of these procedures, which have been explained to me by the Veterinarian.

If Liberty (libby) stops breathing, or their heart stops beating, she will require CPR unless otherwise directed below. Even the most CPR may not restore her to good mental and physical health. In addition to the limited likelihood of success from CPR treatment, s requires additional fees.

Please initial which level of resuscitation you would like us to perform if necessary.

Gb **CPR** I understand cardiopulmonary resuscitation techniques (CPR) will be performed by placing an endotracheal tube for pressure respiration, administering emergency drugs, placing an IV catheter for fluid support and drug administration, and cardiac (chest compressions).

☐ **DO NOT RESUSCITATE** "DNR" or no CPR

Fri 8/27/21 8:49am • Patty Edson_EverlastingStone <paedson@aol.com>
Re: Casket for Mandy > In a horrible twist of fate, our beagle Liberty (Libby) has complete kidney failure and is in emergency hospital on life-saving support. This may be an end to Libby too, so soon after still-unburied Mandy. We are kind of in shock in our house. Never had to bury two at the same time. I'll-let you know if I need a second casket, or if Libby (praying) still has time in her life.

8/28/21 9:30am LIBBY
- **Creatinine:** 8.0 on 8/27 • 7.5 on 8/28
- **BUN:** Too high to read
- High blood pressure: At 200 on 8/27. Given Amloditine. At 160 today. Libby on blood pressure med rest of life.
- No more vomit. No bloody diarrhea. Libby's had 0 poops since admitted.
- Libby has eaten twice today.
- Libby holds head up and lets techs love on her. She rests w/o discomfort.

Her 5-day mark is Mon. If the rate at which her kidney values drop stays as slow as now, ER may say they can't further help her. Dr. Lynch drops off subQ gear, meds, and kidney disease foods on Mon.

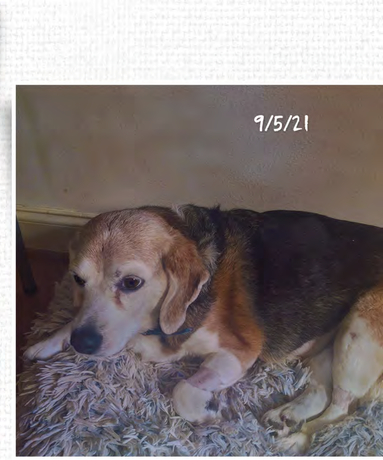
Further support meds depend on her electrolytes when discharged. ER looks at lab values only. Dr. Lynch sees dog's overall countenance. Libby's eats, kisses folks, is alert – even while in sterile hospital away from family. Positive signs, despite unremarkable lab numbers.

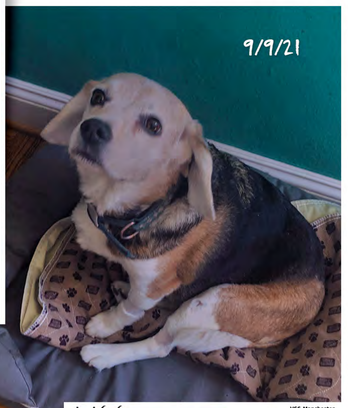
8/29/21 10:00am LIBBY
- **Creatinine:** 7.5 > 8/28 • 7.2 > 8/29
- **BUN:** Too high to read 8/28 • 109 > 8/29
- Blood pressure still normal, on meds.
- No vomit. No bloody diarrhea. No poop.
- Libby ate last night + 2X a.m.. She eats small bits of chicken/rice at feedings.
- Vet says Libby is "brighter" than observed since arrival, but thinks: "no infection" since no response to antibiotics. She says Libby's gastric/bacteria issues are part of kidney disease. Odd. "Bladder infection?"

Dr. Lynch: Tomorrow is pivotal decision day. What do *you* think? Her values decrease, but at very slow rate. I will need medical justification to keep her there, because at $2500 by Mon, Grady is against more pay. I'll only fight for what's best for Libby, so appreciate feedback.

8/30/21 10:00am LIBBY
- **Creatinine:** 7.2 on 8/29 • 5.9 today!
- **BUN:** 109 on 8/29 • 72 today!

(Normal: Creatinine = 1.6-2; BUN = 27)
- Libby "ate well" last night; won't eat this a.m. Vet notes: Libby prefers night meals.
- Libby "brightens" and tries to "jump out of her pen" when Dr. Thompson enters room.
- Urine Culture: Bladder infection exists, separate from kidney disease. Libby on correct antibiotic. Dr. Lynch: check UTI in week or so to see if need 2nd round antibiotics.





- **LIBBY ON THESE MEDS:**
- **Appetite Stimulant • Anti-Nausea**
- **High Blood Pressure Med • Antibiotic**

(may need 2nd round)

Dr. Lynch: Based on biggest drop yet in kidney values, Dr. Thompson suggests Libby stay thru Tue, to see if values lessen again tomorrow. If not, she comes home Tue night. If they move down again she may suggest one more day. Grady will fight me, but don't we want to get her home at lowest values we can get? Today there's hope. Your thoughts? Thx, Brenda

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Fax:
Email: vssa
Emergency:

Client Details		Patient Details	
Name	Mrs Shoss & Ballard, Brenda & Graydon	**Name**	Liberty (libby)
Address	7380 Kingsbury Blvd Saint Louis, MO, 63130	**Species**	Canine
		Breed	beagle
		Age	11 years 25 days
Phone(s)	Brenda: (314) 795-2646, Graydon: (314) 401-0233	**Sex**	Female Spayed

08-26-2021
Renal disease

DESCRIPTION	QTY	
Examination - Emergency Center	1 → 1	$120.
Urinalysis - Dipstick (In House)	1 → 1	$36
Urinalysis - Sediment (In House)	1 → 1	$25
Urine Culture & Susceptibility (IDEXX)	1 → 1	$197.
Ultrasound	1 → 1	$425.
Lepto Snap Test (IVLS)	1 → 1	$47
IV Fluid Set Up	1 → 1	$65
IV Fluids Normosol liter	3 → 4	$111.
Injectable Medications Antibiotic, pain reliever, anti-nausea, sedation, etc.	12 → 15	$300.
Hospitalization ICU Hospitalization & Nursing Care (per 8 hours)	9 → 15	$360.
Oral Medications to go home Antibiotics, pain relievers, etc.	1 → 2	$40
Blood Test - I-Stat Chem 8 (In House)	1 → 3	$72.
Blood Pressure (Doppler)	4 → 6	$128.
Subtotal		$1928.25
Tax		

Gb **CPR** I understand cardiopulmonary resuscitation techniques (CPR) will be performed by pressure respiration, administering emergency drugs, placing an IV catheter for fluid support and (chest compressions).

☐ **DO NOT RESUSCITATE** "DNR" or no CPR

PAYMENT INFORMATION: Veterinary Specialty Services is unable to offer payment plans or delay time that services are provided. We accept payment in the form of Visa, Master Card, Discover, Ca

Gb **I UNDERSTAND THAT ALL PAYMENTS ARE DUE AT THE TIME OF SERVICE.** admission and the balance is due at the time of patient discharge. I agree to pay, in full, a including those deemed necessary for the medical or surgical complications or unforesee pay any additional charges related to the cost of collection (including but not limited to, c attorney fees and court costs), in the event that I would fail to pay my bill. Abandonment obligation, including the disposition of the animal.

L L Ballard

Libby Is Not Like Other Dogs

8/31/21 8:30am LIBBY

◗ **Creatinine:** 5.9 on 8/30 • 4.5 today!

◗ **BUN:** 72 on 8/30 • 56 today!

(Normal: Creatinine = 1.6-2; BUN = 27)

◗ Libby nibbles chicken as Dr. Thompson enters room, but stops for "kisses."

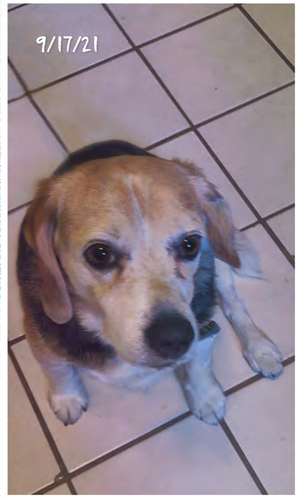
◗ Libby's demeanor gets more alert, engaged as her numbers drop.

◗ Dr. Thompson has treated Libby since Sat. She originally felt Libby had CHRONIC kidney disease/failure. With the rapid drop in kidney values, she now feels Libby suffered ACUTE kidney injury. While the triggering event may remain unknown, it could be Libby's severe bladder infection.

Dr. Lynch: Libby stays on intravenous flush till Wed night. She likely comes home with creatinine in the 3 range. Dr. Lynch, if $$ were not an issue, do you think fluid-flush beyond Wed could hypothetically bring Libby's kidney values back to normal? Dr. Thompson mentioned that with acute kidney injury, some dogs' levels continue to drop at home on subQ. Due to this miraculous turn of events, Libby may ultimately need subQ based on bouts of anorexia, lethargy, but not daily (like your American Eskimo). Vet felt we'd need subQ consistently in immediate weeks post-discharge. I'll give you Libby's final VSS values Wed a.m. so you can prescribe her subQ dose to begin Thu a.m. I'd love your feedback on Dr. Thompson's notes and Libby's longer term prognosis. Thx, Brenda

8/31/21 9:30am LIBBY

Based on great turn of events for Libby Dr. Lynch thinks the trigger to acute kidney damage may have been a *Perfect Storm* of: 1) Severe viral UTI; 2) Eating cicadas (dehydrates); 3) Longish walks when too hot (trigger Brenda guilt). Isolated events are not the culprit. Libby's crunched on cicadas for years. It's the overlap, as a viral bladder infection rages. Libby does have permanent kidney damage, so must stay vigilant: No cicadas, no big walks in heat, check electrolyte/kidney values. We also face illness in Etelah (Puppy), our baby. She had blood-work same day as Libby (pre-ER) and all her liver enzymes are elevated. She pees lakes inside house, off pads. No other symptoms so far. She gets ultrasound 9/7. A 4-dog pack age together. Puppy is youngest, at age 9.



Cara: I'm glad Libby's doing better. Hope Etelah is ok. Does she typically pee inside?

Brenda: Yes. They're pad trained, if can't hold b/t walks. With (formerly) 4 dogs, you just make pee pads part of home decor. They all age, with different illness.

Cara: How do they know to go outside vs just going on the pads indoors?

Brenda: They just do. They're grass trained and prefer that. If they use pads they've held too long or have med issue. Tested Etelah for UTI; she doesn't have.

Cara: Did Etelah eat cicadas too?

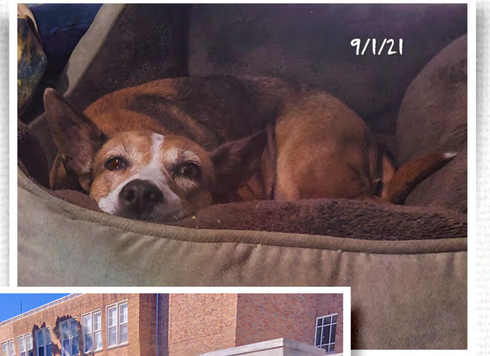
Brenda: No. Her mouth's too wittle!

Cara: Bailey has a wittle mouth too and a butter tongue. Weird, after Labs with big tongues in large mouths!

Brenda: Bailey is an Ewok in a big body.

9/1/21 9:00am LIBBY

Libby comes home today, early evening. *No full-portion dry kibble rest of life*. ER vet said to give wee amount kibble + mix with probiotic/water (moisture/flavor) along with mostly wet food. No harm in using probiotic and can potentially help with changes in stomach flora. Dosing for subQ, blood pressure med, appetite stim, anti-nausea are all subject to Libby's fluctuating values, appetite, etc. **Dr. Lynch:** I have few more questions regarding care upon Libby's homecoming tonight. Hope to speak to you by phone. Thx, Brenda



LIBBY MEDS (kidney disease)

1) Antibiotic	•	Recheck: URINE in 1 week
2) Blood Pressure Med	•	Recheck: PRESSURE 1-2 wks
3) Appetite Stimulant	•	Recheck: VALUES 1-2 wks
4) Anti-Nausea Med	•	Recheck: VALUES 1-2 wks
5) Wei Qi Booster Pills	2 Pills AM • 2 Pills PM	

LIBBY MEALS (kidney disease)

1) Try KIDNEY WET 1st	**BEST food for Libby. Mix in ground chicken or other tease if won't eat plain.	Try each flavor to see if likes any. Record favorite flavor.
2) Try WERUVA WET 2nd	If only eats Weruva plain, serve it with no mix-in.	=OR= Mix in small amount: Kidney Wet w/ Weruva
3) Try CHICKEN/RICE 3rd OR Mix in w/ any wet	Chicken & Rice [or Bagel Bits] by itself if won't eat wet food.	=OR= Mix in with Kidney Wet Mix in with Weruva
4) NO Dry Kibble =OR= 1-2 Tablespoons Kibble + Water/Probitic Powder	1-2 Tablespoons Kibble + Warm Water & Probitic Pouch	Libby needs moisture. Kibble bad. Only use to get her to eat.

9/1/21 9:30am LIBBY

Libby comes home today, early evening.

◗ **Creatinine:** 4.5 on 8/31 • 3.8 today

◗ **BUN:** 56 on 8/31 • 46 today

(Normal: Creatinine = 1.6-2; BUN = 27)

◗ Libby ate 1/2 cup chicken-rice last night; 1/4 cup Proplan wet a.m.

◗ Libby gives kisses to Dr. Thompson this a.m. Interested in everything around her, alert.

◗ Numbers did *not* drop as much today as hoped, based on size of last two drops. Values likely to level out here at 3.8/46 or bit lower. Vet still thinks Acute Kidney Injury caused failure, but that injury event is layered atop the start of Chronic Kidney Disease. Libby's high blood pressure suggests that kidney disease had begun before acute event.

◗ How Libby does in first few weeks home is strong indicator whether she gets to live longer or die within months.

RECHECK IN 1-2 WEEKS: ✓ Urine ✓ Kidney Values ✓ Electrolytes ✓ Blood Pressure

9/1/21 10:15 am LIBBY: In last 48 hrs, her numbers dropped drastically so I prayed she'd be at 3.1 or 3.2 creatine today when she stops ER flush. Instead, she dropped less today, leveling out at 3.8. ER vet strongly feels an Acute Kidney Injury triggered renal failure, but Chronic Kidney Disease had already begun. Beagle lifespan can be 15+ yrs. We know we won't get Libby as long as Mandy (who died at 15). ER vet implied Libby has another year, if she does well on home care. But Dr. Lynch tells: *Libby is not like other dogs.*

Cara: Libby decides when it's time. Anything is possible. So remarkable how her numbers dropped! That's great she's coming home today. Go Libby!!

Wed 9/1/21 4:20pm LIBBY COMES HOME!

Shit, it's already 4:40. Can't believe you haven't seen Luke. Can you be here by 5:30, to get Libby by 6:00? How late are visiting hours, if you were to return later? Lij, Luke is in hospital with high blood pressure.

Grady: I should be able to be back by 5:30.

Elijah: I know he is, Vic said he was doing alright.

Brenda: GB, I'll be downstairs at 5:30.

Elijah: Mabel looks so cute.

Brenda: Mabel hasn't left my side since Libby at VSS. It's gonna break my heart when she's marooned on 1st floor again cuz we must separate hounds. In first pic, Mabel's working her goofy hyena look. GB, I called VSS so we have 6:00-6:30 window. • **Grady:** I'm on way.

9/1/21: Relief. Bliss. In Dad's arms after a week of life-saving care at VSS.

9/8/21 LIBBY KIDNEY VALUES

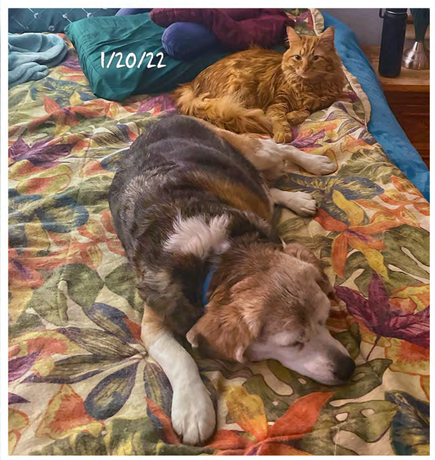
- **Creatinine:** 9/1/21 Tue VSS creatine: 3.8
  9/8/21 home creatinine: 3.9 (bad)
  + Libby had full 9/2 Wed on fluids (no values taken), so I suspect she left VSS even lower than 3.8.
- **BUN:** 9/1/21 Tue VSS BUN: 46
  9/8/21 home BUN: 110 (doubled+ very bad)
  (Normal: Creatinine = 1.6-2; BUN = 27)

I will fight for her till the end, but this kinda tells me she's dying more quickly than I'd prayed (to whatever) for.

Mon 9/13/21 5:02pm LIBBY HOME KIDNEY CARE

Libby's been home a week+, off intravenous flush. At first read, creatinine/BUN crept up. Dr. Lynch says 2nd read sets pattern for if she's maintaining or dying. Libby's kidneys will never return to normal. But she can live for awhile with creatinine in 3-4 range. Libby is 3.9 at first home check, up from 3.6 on last day in ER. If her Fri read goes up, we're in trouble. She eats well (ground turkey or chicken), begs for table scraps. We get excited when she does Bad Beagle Behavior, such as slurping cat food off counters (she stands on back legs) or litter box break-ins. Amid Libby's ordeal Etelah has elevated liver levels. She had ultrasound last Tue. No cancer or liver disease (thank god). But they found crystals and bladder stones. We'll try urinary med food for a month; if no shrinkage, then surgery. So now my youngest has crystals disease. This has truly been the worst year for dogs here (except when Ethel was killed). So far, my kiddens are okay. But I don't take a single day for granted with any of them.

Cara: Thanks for the update. Hope Libby holds and I hope the food helps Etelah. • **Brenda:** You are such a Good Aunt Cara. You have a relationship with your human nephew, but also check on your dog/cat nephews or nieces.



9/17/21 LIBBY KIDNEY VALUES

- **Creatinine:** 3.9 on 9/8 • 3.4 on 9/17!
- **BUN:** 110 on 9/8 • 76 on 9/17!

10/1/21 LIBBY KIDNEY VALUES

- **Creatinine:** 3.4 on 9/17 • 2.1 on 10/1!
- **BUN:** 76 on 9/17 • 51 on 10/1!
- **SDMA (kidney sensitivity):** Unchanged

SDMA shows dysfunction via degenerative disease.

Libby's kidney values are gorgeous. Her behavior and energy (+ near normal creatinine) are basically a miracle.
Cara: Well, look at Libby go!!

10/19/21 LIBBY KIDNEY VALUES

- **Creatinine:** 2.1 on 10/1 • 2.5 on 10/19 (bad, rose)
- **BUN:** 51 on 10/1 • 71 on 10/19 (bad, rose)

We're testing for UTI, since she's had several big in-house pees. Bladder infection bacteria originally entered her bloodstream and worsened kidney function. We can't let a new one get outta hand and affect kidneys. Libby needs round of antibiotics again, if she even has a UTI.

Tue 10/26/21 12:41pm Cara: How's it going with Etelah?
Brenda: Etelah still has stones but bit less so we'll stay on script foods another month. Surgery still likely. Crystals diet for life.
Cara: Ok. Hope she can avoid surgery. • **Brenda:** So does Puppy.

Cara: So are you done with what you had to do for her today?
Brenda: No, walks + subQ fluids. Are you still at hospital with mom?
Cara: Lots of work for your old gals. Yes, Deanna and I are on shifts.
Brenda: That's why I say I live on a farm and have chores!

11/10/21 LIBBY KIDNEY VALUES

- **Creatinine:** 2.5 on 10/19 • 2.9 on 11/10 (bad, keeps rising)
- **BUN:** 71 on 10/19 • 79 on 11/10 (bad. also keeps rising)
- **SDMA:** 22 on 10/19 • 20 on 11/10 (good, down a smidge)
- Libby begins **Phosphorous Binder** today for electrolytes.

Wed 11/10/21 10:10am: Just an FYI to you Cara, before we go into meeting shortly. Libby is going in wrong direction. Her kidney read 3 weeks ago was the first time values went up, instead of down. Today's read: They've gone up more. It's not as much about numbers as a pattern that's headed toward kidney failure. Only this time, there is no kidney flush in-hospital. This time, she dies in our arms.

We begin Phosphorous Binder today. Libby happy, cuz she eats binder in cat broth (yum). I've never buried two back-to-back. Pray to whatever you believe for our sweet girl Libby Schwibby.

Cara: I pray to dad when I need a big one, so I'll ask him to help your sweet girl Libby. A big hug and kiss from Aunt Cara.
Brenda: Dad. Whom better, to seek mercy for a drooney?
Cara: Exactly. I find comfort in talking to him.
Brenda: I talk to Mandy, cuz we're alike in many ways. Seriously. Mandy was a middle-age Jewish woman with fur.
Cara: Can you send me a photo of Libby, please? Aw, that's so sweet about Mandy. I hope she'll help her sister Libby out here.

Fri 11/12/21 10:11am Cara: How's Libby doing?
Brenda: Libby is dying her way, a true beagle. Fate is a nasty-ass bitch, no matter what you do to save a life.
Cara: I hope she can be her sweet self as long as fate lets her.

11/29/21 LIBBY KIDNEY VALUES

Libby is dying, despite fucking everything.

- **Creatinine:** 2.9 on 11/10 • 3.4 on 11/29 (spike)
- **BUN:** 79 on 11/10 • 84 on 11/29 (bad, spike)
- **SDMA:** 20 on 11/10 • Too high to register 11/29
- **Electrolytes:** Improved balance on Phosphorous
- Libby tested for Lepto-something bacteria (in dirty water like Des Peres creek): Negative. No treatable breaks, as her kidney values worsen over 3+ reads.

12/13/21 LIBBY VALUES, *A Mixed Bag*

- **Creatinine:** 3.4 on 11/29 • 3.1 on 12/13 (good)
- **BUN:** 84 on 11/29 • 81 on 12/13 (good)
- **SDMA:** Too high to read 11/29 • 28 on 12/13
  (better, SDMA registered this time • 14 is normal)
- **Phosphorous:** 7.8 on 11/29 • 5.8 on 12/13 (good)
  5.8 = in normal Phos range; binder helps kidneys hold on to electrolytes, not flush them out.
- **Liver Enzymes:** A:LP enzyme elevated. Add Milk Thistle to meds (Denemarin backorder). Herbsmith Herbal Blends Milk Thistle Powdered Supplement. Libby >> half of 1/8 tspn 2x daily
  If kidneys can't flush toxins, liver works harder. Reason enzymes up? *[At end, when Libby dies of renal end-stage congestive heart failure, a mass in her liver also indicates cancer.]*
- Libby to begin Azodyl (for BUN), but backordered

Tue 12/21/21 4:24pm: Etelah's stones have enlarged, with spikes now – despite several months of urinary health vet food. I have to schedule surgery for her. Beginning with Mabel's lifesaving surgery to Mandy's cancer/death, Libby's kidney disease, Etelah's urinary disease… it's just been nonstop dog hospital for 3 years. Trying to keep my kids alive. FYI: Etelah has same UT crystals disease that Isaiah had his whole life.

Fri 12/10/21 6:06pm: But here's some cuteness. Libby doesn't like her Science Diet renal food. We've tried 2 brands; only I kidney medical food left to try. It came today. So far so good…

Cara: Ugh. Poor Grady. Hope he feels better soon. *[Unknown at time, Grady has Covid Pneumonia.]* Go Libby! A relief she likes that food.

Brenda: I guess we'll see if Libby still eats it in "the real world." In pic, she eats from a cat dish used upstairs for her Phosphate mixed in cat food. So when she sees that white bowl, she goes crazy and thinks it's cat food. When renal food is served in the harsh reality of her dog bowl – will she still eat? I dunno. She's not talking…
Cara: Lol. She's not talking. Time will tell.

1/3/22 LIBBY KIDNEY VALUES

- **Creatinine:** 3.1 on 12/13 • 3.3 on 1/3 (bad)
- **BUN:** 81 on 12/13 • 85 on 1/3 (bad)
- **SDMA:** 28 on 12/13 • 25 on 1/3 (good)
- **Phosphorous:** 5.8 on 12/13 • 6.7 on 1/3 (bad)
- **Liver Enzymes:** 2187 on 12/13 • 1701 on 1/3 (better)
  ALP was 1289 when left VSS; 200 range is normal.

Libby's creatinine, BUN and phosphorous all rose. However, Dr. Lynch looks most closely at SDMA, which went down. Unless Libby's values rise dramatically, Dr. Lynch thinks she's holding her own at moment.

Fate is a nasty bitch

2/7/22 LIBBY KIDNEY VALUES

Bad news for sweet Libby.

- **Creatinine:** 3.3 on 1/3 • 4.9 on 2/7 (dangerous)
- **BUN:** 85 on 1/3 • 106 on 2/7 (dangerous)
- **SDMA:** 25 on 1/3 • 28 on 2/7 (dangerous)
- **Phosphorous:** 6.7 on 1/3 • 12.5 on 2/7 (horrible)
- **ALP Liver Enzyme:** 1701 on 1/3 • 1936 on 2/7 (bad)

Kidney values have spiked into highest range since Libby left VSS. This could mean we're at end, or not. We introduced a new med since last blood draw: Azodyl. A med can work in *wrong* direction, so Dr. Lynch stopped Azodyl. We'll see if her values drop to better range in a few weeks.

.

Hope stops

2/18/22 LIBBY KIDNEY VALUES

Creatinine decreased by .5, so Libby likely had bad reaction to Azody and her body is fighting its way back.

- **Creatinine:** 4.9 on 2/7 • 4.4 on 2/18 (decrease, good)
- **BUN:** 106 on 2/7 • 112 on 2/18 (dangerous)
- **SDMA:** 28 on 2/7 • 30 on 2/18 (dangerous)
- **Phosphorous:** 12.5 on 2/7 • 9.4 on 2/18 (down, good)
- **Potassium:** 6.5 on 2/7 • 5.8 on 2/18 (down, good)
- **Calcium:** 12.1 on 2/7 • 12.7 on 2/18 (up, bad)
- **ALP Liver Enzyme:** 1936 on 2/7 • 1730 on 2/7 (good)

Libby's been off Azodyl a bit over two weeks (since we got that awful kidney read 2/7). Dr. Lynch stopped Azodyl to see if her values decreased. Creatinine, phosphorus and potassium did come down (tho others went up). If at end-stage renal disease, her creatinine may not have come down.

.

Fri 2/25/22 4:40pm LEG BREAK

I'm at VSS. Libby-Mabel got in fight on walk . Libby's leg is broken and she'll need surgery. Anesthesia very dangerous with kidney disease. I'm terrified. I don't even think these hounds can be walked together.

Elijah: Oh man, I'm really sorry. Is she going to be okay?

Emily: I'm so sorry :(I hope she's not in too much pain.

Brenda: It's awful, radius and ulna bones crushed like dust cuz dog bite wounds. Needs surgical pin-balloon device when they can do surgery next week. Coming home splinted on opioids tonight, to wait for surgery next week, kidneys may not survive this. Overwhelmed, sorry. • **Elijah:** I wish I could help.

Brenda: Coming home on Coedine, gabapentin, antibiotic, hooded, splinted… excruciating pain. Then we just have to wait like that, with crushed bones, till they can get her a surgery spot. Could be week+. Right when dad home from surgery. I am in mild shock at moment. Haven't even been in house since walk. Have to drive now.

Fri 2/25/22 8:18pm: I gave Etelah her med in cat food. Libby awakens and starts whining. So I carry her in and she eats entire packet of cat gravy topper with her phosphate. I was surprised she had appetite at all. (Only interested in cat food tho). All dogs are stoic, but she's most stoic I've ever known. I have a gut feeling we'll be in months of hell, but she'll somehow trudge through it. I hope they can do surgery soon.

Elijah: Hope so, she's a fighter.

Brenda: It's not an issue now, cuz Libby can't do walks. But after that we may never be able to walk them together, unless two people walk them at a distance from each other. *[Promise broken: She never walked again.]*

Emily: Poor thing. Sending love to you both.

Brenda: "She's a fighter," is a loaded statement regarding Ms. Libby, cuz fighting (bad kind) got her into this. Thank you both for support. It's surreal that Grady becomes complete invalid as of Mon… and now this.

Sat 2/26/22 10:50am LEG BREAK: As we await surgery Libby lays zonked on coedine. Grady got her to poop this a.m. Yay for Grady. Yay for poop.

Elijah: Praying for Libby.

Mon 2/28/22 9:01am: The nurse just called: Dad's in surgery now, going well. The doctor is supposed to call to talk condescendingly to me (orthopedics do that, especially to women) about when dad might come home.

The codeine for Libby pain caused seizures! They're drug-induced, not actual brain seizures, but super scary. She can't take codeine ever. Grady and I took turns using scalp massager head-to-tail on her. That helped bring her around (stimulates nerves) as the last dose wore off. I'm doing fluids/meds now; gotta take all out to pee/poop.

Elijah: OMG that poor dog . 😿 Is she calm now?

Brenda: Libby's surgery is tomorrow Tue 7:45am, at VSS. I fucking missed call from Barnes cuz on with VSS.

Mon 2/28/22 11:33am: Someone who is orange thought it'd be hard funny to commandeer Libby's bed.

Emily: Noooooo, get outta there Booker! Poor Libby. How Grady's knee surgery go?

Brenda: I believe ok. No doctor call yet, only nurses.

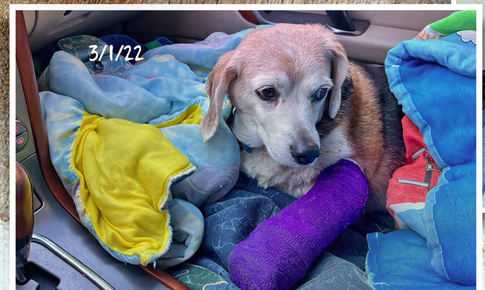
Elijah: Hi Libby. • **Emily:** Hope she's not in much pain.

Brenda: She's more like herself off codeine.

Mon 2/28/22 1:57pm: GB's already home and downright chatty. Using walker. Dad had epidermal (like I got to deliver you!) to numb from waist down. Then sedated. Under general anesthesia, I was in hospital full day. Dad's peppy and alert. In fact, a wittle nicer? • **Elijah:** Wow

Brenda: In pic, Mom and Libs take nap. I actually shot a selfie. Did you know dogs sometimes sleep eyes open (like Libby here)? Mildly creepy.

Mon 2/28/22 3:32pm: Libby, already battling kidney disease, gets emergency surgery with a pin device implanted in her leg where Mabel bit through flesh and crushed two bones. Our hounds live gate-separated on different floors due to random death-fights. But we'd always been able to walk them together with Etelah. Other day, they fought on walk (over some gnarly thing on ground). A man saw me with my arm in their mouths struggling to pull them apart; he ran out to help. Libby's front left leg was bent backwards and she was in shock. The man helped me transfer Libby directly to my car (and took other two inside for me) so I could go straight to ER. Xray shows broken radius and ulna at "wrist" area. Libby has comminuted fracture – bones shattered. I meet with surgeon tomorrow for Libby's 7:45am surgery. They insert pins and the device extends outside her leg. Libby starts the fights, but Mabel is stronger. This is worst scenario possible for a kidney fail dog, short of dying. Only "perk" is that Libby gets 4-day IV kidney flush pre/during/post surgery (doggie dialysis). General anesthesia is scary cuz Libby has kidney disease. It's a weird (and tragic) coincidence that two orthopedic traumas overlapped: Grady + Libby. At one point I consulted with vet ortho, with GB's ortho on hold. Deep prayers for Libs. **She's a true hard ass. Dr. Lynch calls her Roller Derby Queen.**



Cara: Oh no. That's awful. Thank goodness for the Good Samaritan who helped. I guess they can't cast it with that type fracture. Poor Libby.
Brenda: No. They'll hold bone pieces with pin device, till they merge. I've seen this before on a cat, it's a big needle-y balloon-shape apparatus that extends from leg. It won't be easy.
Cara: External fixator. • **Brenda:** Stellar.

Tue 3/1/22 12:30am: Libby did fantastic today. First time since incident (last Fri) that she ate all her food w/o force feed. We hope for the best tomorrow. I take her for 7:45am surgery.
Elijah: Good luck. She'll do great. She's strong.
Brenda: She's a fighter, a survivalist.
Elijah: You better sleep soon.
Brenda: I'll sleep from 2:30 to 5:30am. But after Libby is situated there, nothing I can do but wait.

Tue 3/1/22 7:58am: That's Libs, passenger-side as we head out to VSS. She took one of those alien huge poops outside VSS, before vet tech brought her inside. Good, cuz she hadn't pooped in 2 days! Now waiting for vet consult, here in parking lot awhile. Luv For Libs ❤️
Emily: Go Libby! • **Cara:** Nice job on big poop!

Tue 3/1/22 10:30am: No surgery. Explain later.
Emily: NOOO :(((• **Elijah:** OMG why :(
Brenda: Driving. Now at Walgreens for dad. Listen to my vm when you can. Dr. Anderson's words: ***If I operate on Libby today, your dog will fucking die on table.*** She stays day and half on IV kidney flush while they change cast, hygiene wound… and comes home casted. I take her to VSS every week to change dressing. Her leg may heal (never fully) to point that she is 3-legged dog, holding bad leg off ground. I don't want her to die. Not much more I can do. She'll hobble stairs and hop around in coming weeks, so I don't destroy my back permanently. It's a comminuted fracture so bone in small pieces. • **Elijah:** She's strong! I heard vm.

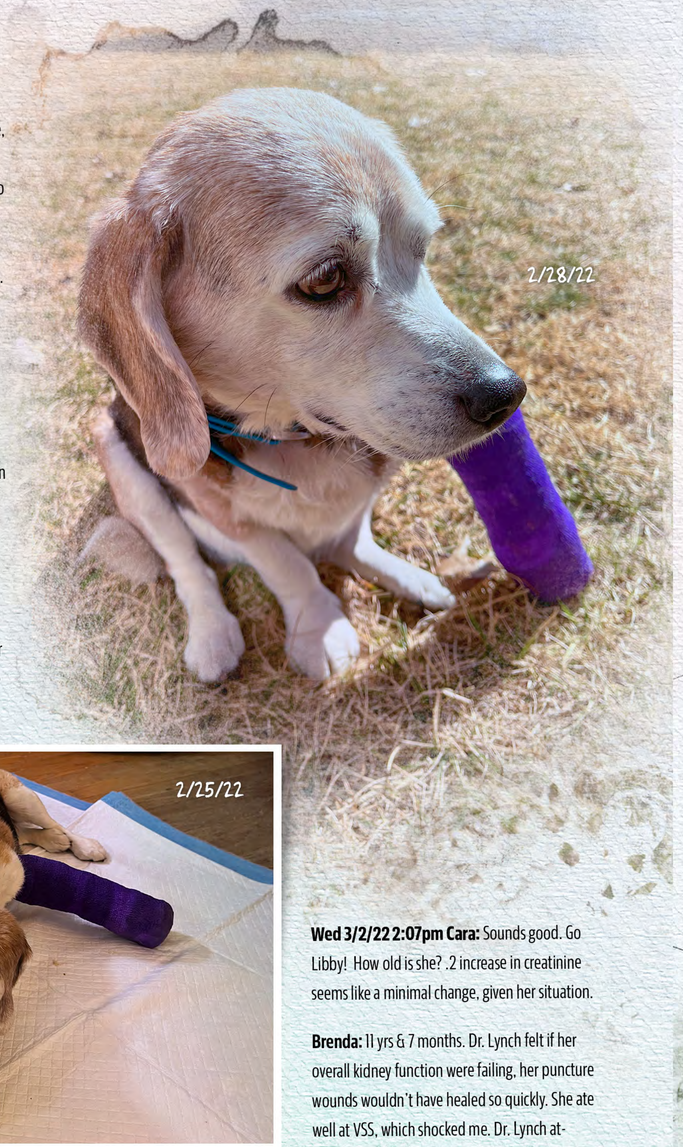
Brenda: I have a really hard time dealing w/ this cuz it didn't have to happen, if I'd been strong enuf to restrain them when able to part them a sec during fight. Or if I'd been vigilant about separate walks. Tho the very spirit of those walks has been the girls on a shared adventure. Dr. Lynch suggested I stroller Lib when home, to help with depression. I can't imagine Libby not trying to jump. All the ground smells are like cocaine for a beagle…
Elijah: It is not your fault. They fought for years, since we got Mabel. It's impossible to perfectly separate them, lifelong.

Tue 3/1/22 6:06pm: FYI, Dr Anderson just called. Libby's bite wounds were treated + a new cast in place. He won't X-ray again for 4 wks, to let it heal. Dr A actually said he's "hopeful" for Libby's recovery. Lame dog on 3 legs? He said: "No, actually more hopeful than that." Libby's a fucking army tank. Long live Libby!

3/2/22 LIBBY, AT VSS: Libby's been on IV flush day and half. Creatinine rose mildly; could be stress. Low punctures 100% healed; deeper bite healing nicely.

3/2/22 LIBBY KIDNEY VALUES
- **Creatinine:** 4.4 > 2/18 • 4.6 > 3/2 (bad)
- **BUN:** 112 > 2/18 • 86 > 3/2 (good)
- **SDMA:** 30 > 2/18 • 38 > 3/2 (bad)
- **Phosphorous:** 9.4 > 2/18
  9.2 > 3/2 (better)
- **Potassium:** 5.8 > 2/18 • 6.3 > 3/2 (bad)
- **Calcium:** 12.7 > 2/18 • 11.8 > 3/2 (good)
- **ALP Liver Enzyme:** 1730 on 2/7
  1200 on 3/2 (good)

Libby cast change is 3/11 + each 14 days thereafter. At 4 wks, they re-xray bone fragments.



Wed 3/2/22 2:07pm Cara: Sounds good. Go Libby! How old is she? .2 increase in creatinine seems like a minimal change, given her situation.

Brenda: 11 yrs & 7 months. Dr. Lynch felt if her overall kidney function were failing, her puncture wounds wouldn't have healed so quickly. She ate well at VSS, which shocked me. Dr. Lynch attributed .2 creatinine rise to stress. She looks at patterns over time. We'd maintained Libby's creatinine in 3.1-3.9 range for months. She ate fine, normal energy, engaged. But then we introduced Azydol (for BUN). Some dogs react adversely to certain kidney drugs. Outta blue, her creatinine shot to 4.9. We stopped Azydol and her creatinine had already dropped to 4.4. Our pre-break goal was to tweak till we got back in 3-range. Then this trauma. We'll know if there is a kidney-fail pattern if her creatinine rises at next read. I pick up Libby in about an hour. I got her a flat orthopedic mattress (no rims) so she can stretch out in her cast from room to room.

Thu 3/3/22 1:47pm Cara: She looks happy in that photo. Give her a hug and kiss from her aunt Cara.

Brenda: I know. This pic lights my heart. After I walk other two, I spend time in backyard with her. I'm a stay-at-home Dog Mom. More like an on-call nurse for Libs, other animals, GB? Libby now has night anxiety. She paces, hard-pants… I move her from bed to floor pads, get water, massage her. We didn't both get to sleep till nearly 5:00am. And I gotta be up by 7:00am to get to Grady and animals all over again. Basically, the only thing dogs, cats, Grady can do without me is pee and poop.
Cara: Oh wow. Brenda Sissa nightingale!

Brenda: FYI, we call him Princess Grady at moment. He gets upset if I cater to Libby's needs before his.
Cara: We? Are the animals calling him Princess Grady? Lol
Brenda: Yes, of course. Mabel just rolls her eyes…

Tue 3/11/22 8:59am: Hi Christy, I wanted to let you know that Libby's fight is over. The crushed leg has been too much for her kidneys. I am sickened that I couldn't pull Mabel and Libby apart in fight and that I even walked them together in first place. But The Girls lived for adventure-walks for years. Libby is already 100% anorexic (I force-feed), with tremors. Days left? A month or two? There are no miracles left. She'll be my youngest dog to die – except for 1.5-year old Ethel, Libby's soulmate, killed by speeding car. I haven't even designed Mandy's marker yet, and now Libby. I have no words. Thank you for keeping Kinship Circle alive during this horrible time.

Christy Griffin: I'm so very sorry, Brenda. My heart goes out to you. All we can do in the end is make their final days as peaceful as possible and surround them with love. I am still absolutely devastated after losing Ronnie 3 years ago and Mason 2 years ago. I am so sorry.

Brenda: We share a wretched experience of two hearts lost, just a year apart. For me it was Mandy and now Libby. I worry for my little Lhasa-Maltese mix, Etelah. She's Libby's sidekick; they're inseparable. Etelah already shows depression, with Libby sick and unable to do their daily dog stuff. I always knew that when Libby died, it would be as if Ethel were killed a second time. They were The Two, saved from the same puppy mill.

Tue 3/11/22 8:59am: The crushed leg is too much for Libby's kidneys. Libby is 100% anorexic (I force-feed), with tremors. I don't know how much time we have left. **Elijah: What date do you come home?** My experience with past kidney kids is that Libby has another month or two left.

Tue 3/11/22 4:26pm: Libby enjoys a dental chew, back in car after her first cast change at VSS. Magenta! Surface bite wounds healed nicely. We won't get bones x-rayed for another few weeks.

Tue 3/13/22 8:26am: She still won't eat on her own. Not even bagel bites. Her demeanor seems brighter. She walked perimeter of backyard, pee-marking every few feet, to remind us whose boss. She was waggy-tail, standing at top of steps when I got home from class. But she just won't eat on her own. Kidney values test this coming Wed will reveal everything.
Elijah: Damn I wish she would eat.

Brenda: I think we'll learn her creatinine is at some god-awful level in 6's. That would be a "rush to ER" level if she hadn't already done a week and a half on IV last Aug. The second time kidneys deteriorate there is usually no come back. That's why I said, other day, she might be in 2nd to last phase of kidney disease. She is not quite end-stage. Zero vomit or diarrhea. In fact, her stools are beautiful (no blood or debris). I'd prayed her nausea was related to antibiotics/painkillers – but those were stopped 4 days ago.

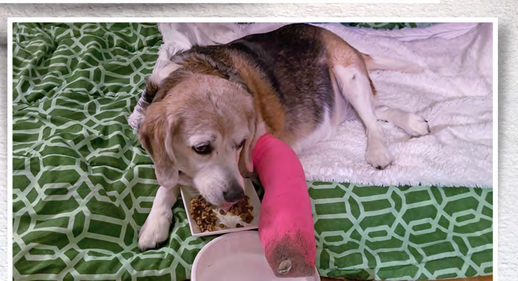
She never comes back

Thu 3/3/22 1:47pm: Libby enjoys sunshine and howls when dogs pass by.

Mon 3/7/22 5:06pm: Booker always is close to the sick doggie!
Emily: They look so cozy.
Elijah: awww Hi Booker and Libby.

Tue 3/8/22 1:08pm: One orthopedic patient is close by to support the other. • **Emily:** So sweet! Elijah's in his CS exam right now. Send him telepathic good luck...

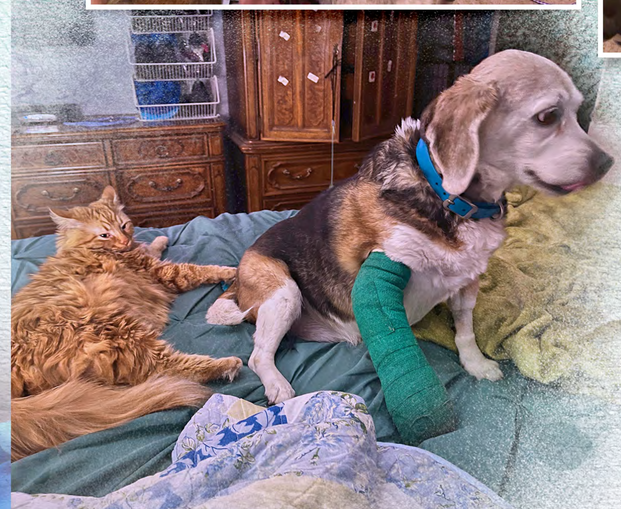
Tue 3/13/22 6:56pm: Caught! Somebody else (weirdly) likes to nibble on Libby's renal wet food.
Elijah: Hey Baby Noah! That's not yours!



Tue 3/13/22 6:56pm: Ms Libby just inhaled a bowl of cat kibble. First time I've seen her enthusiastic about *any* food in days. Not a kibble left and she's still licking bowl.

Elijah: Wow. She demolished that.

3/14/22 Last Days Of The 3



She wants to stay

Tue 3/15/22 8:36pm Elijah: Aww she loves it. • **Brenda:** I massage Lib's legs, cast, belly and kidneys area with coconut oil cuz I think it "fixes" anything. After her rubdown, she reached bottom of stairs in my lap, and cast-galloped across living room toward GB's burger.

Wed 3/17/22 11:23am : FYI, lower numbers mean better: Shockingly, Libby's values held steady since 3/2. Not "walking dead" we expected! But her liver enzymes are sky high and may cause anorexia. She's been tested for tumors, liver disease...with no firm results. She may have infection from rotten teeth. I brush them daily, but damage done. No anesthesia, so no teeth extracted. She begins liver med + antibiotic today. We hope to get electrolytes down and bring her back.

3/17/22 LIBBY KIDNEY VALUES

- **Creatinine:** 4.6 > 3/2 • 4.6 > 3/17
- **BUN:** 86 > 3/2 • 108 > 3/17 (bad)
- **SDMA:** 38 > 3/2 • 30 > 3/17 (good)
- **Phosphorous:** 9.2 > 3/2 • 8.4 > 3/17 (better)
- **Potassium:** 6.3 > 3/2 • 7.4 > 3/17 (bad, liver)
- **Calcium:** 11.8 > 3/2 • 12.5 > 3/17 (bad)
- **ALP Liver Enzyme:** 1200 > 3/2 • 4000 > 3/17 (we learned at death she had liver cancer)

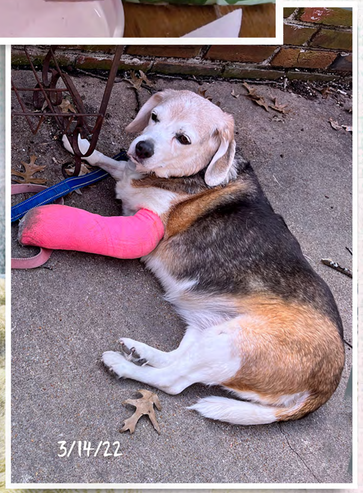
Libby gets cast change Wed 3/23 + first x-ray since 2/25, to see if any bone fragments fused.

Emily: She seems to be doing okay! Go Libby! • **Elijah:** That's good news!!

Brenda: We don't know why her liver enzyme is fucking 4000 (normal = 200), but her main kidney function is intact (for chronic kidney disease). If creatinine had risen to 5 or more, she'd be gone. So we gotta solve liver/electrolytes and drop her creatinine a bit. Considering what we'd expected, I'm still kinda reeling. ***Dr Lynch said she's never seen a dog fight so hard to stay...*** 💚

Emily: I believe in her. • **Elijah:** I do too.

Wed 3/17/22 6:45am: Far as I can tell, life is a shithole, god is a white supremacist and NOTHING, absolutely NOTHING veers positive. People hate. Kill. Ban. Subjugate and oppress. And beagles die. Because you couldn't save her in a fight. Because the fight should never have happened. A normal day. Your kid is sick, but manageable and living a new normal. For how long? Don't know. But each day she walks down the bed's doggie steps. Curls at your feet under the desk. Side slurps cat food out of dishes. Runs up and down steps. Wags at the door. Follows. Protects. Loves. Undying trust. Yea, well the last parts don't die. But now the rest of her dies in pieces. Rapidly. Daily. Because a fight on 2/25/22 has stolen her days. Even as you sit with her quivering body, leg bent backwards, in shock...Even as you drive to VSS. Each minute its own agony. Even then. You know. She won't survive this.



Turns out you're right. Because you always are. Miracles don't happen. I grapple. Beg fate. Force the food down. Carry her. Medicate her. Place tiny morsels before her. Eat. Pls eat. Give me some beagle spirit. A second for hope. But worse. Each day. I am Nurse Zombie. Get up by 6:30am. Shuffle through motions. I am Libby's breath. Her pulse. Her tremors and pants. I am her angel. But her killer too. I am sick. She is minutes from Ethel. Gone to the ground. Gone. Gone. Gone. Can't see. Can't touch. Another forever. I am sick.

Sun 3/20/22 9:20am: Your daily weirdo kiddens. • **Emily:** If only Booker purred, I'd tell u to make him and Libby cuddle while purring to heal her broken bones. Does Baby Noah purr?

Brenda: Lawn mower. Purry cuddle kidden. I can't live without him. He's 15.
Emily: Such a gentle king.
Brenda: King of New Orleans. We see him as a hipster jazz artist...

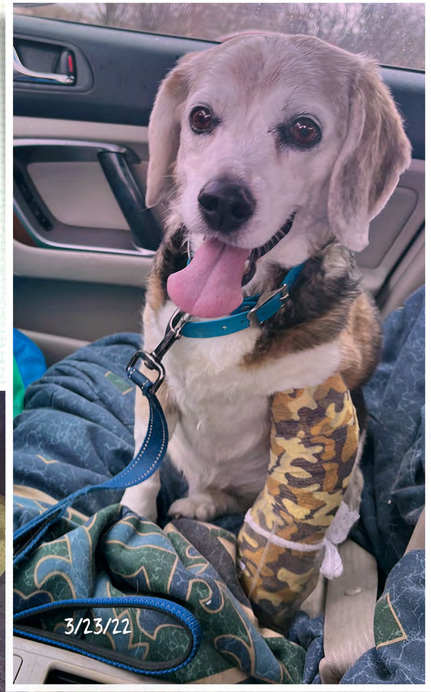
Mon 3/21/22 10:47am Emily: omg! Whoever picks up Elijah from wisdom teeth surgery, pls record everything. He's gonna be so goofy. What's up?
Brenda: I'm walking The 2 and Elijah passed out sleeping since he walked in from airport. So sorry but gonna need to post him message re: Libby, if he reads this chat first. • **Emily:** hehe I figured.

Brenda: *LIJ: I'm walking Mabel/Pup & Libby loose on 1st floor. Can't use steps cuz broken leg. Close bottom stairs gate only when come down. Keep basement door closed too. Libby is sick and can't afford more injury/infection. *

Wed 3/23/22 3:50pm: Now that everyone at VSS saw how Libby pulverized her cast (hole at base, raveled bandage, dirt), they opted for camo instead of pink. Camo Girl. • **Emily:** SO CUTE!

Mon 3/28/22 9:24am Cara: How are you and your patients doing? Sounds like Elijah's wisdom tooth procedure went well.

Brenda: Libby was maintaining, eating, dumpster diving... being her beagle self pre-break. Now it's a slide to 100% anorexia (I forcefeed 1.5 cans renal daily). She has nonstop tremors, shaking and on top of kidney disease, has an elevated liver ALP enzyme of 4000 (normal is 200). Grady still can't do anything. All dogs/cats are on some kinda med, special diet etc. Libby takes 4 hrs two times daily (force-feed, meds, fluids).



Moment of grace

It's the hardest thing I've ever done. But she's worth it. Her leg heals even as renal disease worsens. ALP enzymes are less serious than ALT, and rise can indicate dental infection – which Libby may have. Since she can never have gen anesthesia, can't get vet clean/extraction. So she's on timed antibiotics for rest of life. We also think she has gastric ulcers; just finished Sucralfate for that. Her poop reverted to healthy golden brown (was near black from ulcer blood) but she still won't eat on own + continual tremors. Tho shakes can be related to renal disease, Dr Lynch & ortho-vet think her tremors/hard pants may be anxiety over confluence of events happening to her body at once.

Cara: Libby had quite a trauma for an older dog with kidney issues. Hopefully she'll get closer to baseline as she continues to heal.

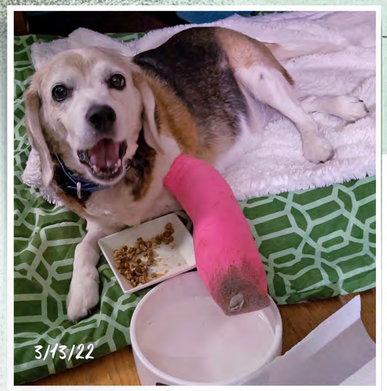
3/31/22: LIBBY IS A MIRACLE, says Dr. Lynch. Her creatinine dropped from 4.6 to 3.5 (pre-break survivable range)! Her BUN dropped from 110 to 64 (best BUN yet). Most other values came down too. We think her high Potassium (electrolyte) causes tremors/anorexia. We're exploring options for that. Fingers crossed we can keep her in this survivable zone, and it's not just a one-time fluke.

Long live Liberty Belle Beagle.

Thu 3/31/22 11:19am Elijah: Yayy!

Brenda: It's nearly impossible for a dog's creatinine to drop after it's crossed over 4.5+. It's like she's regenerating her kidneys, tho impossible. Somebody musta sent Libby today's lab results, cuz for first time in weeks she ate Weruva (actual dog food) outta can.

Emily: WOWWWW! GO LIBBY!



3/31/22 LIBBY'S LAST TRIUMPH

- **Creatinine:** 4.6 > 3/17 • 3.5 > 3/31 (miracle)
- **BUN:** 108 > 3/17 • 64 > 3/31 (miracle)
- **SDMA:** 30 > 3/17 • 34 > 3/31 (bad)
- **Phosphorous:** 8.4 > 3/17 • 8.6 > 3/31 (bad)
- **Potassium:** 7.4 > 3/17 • 6.6 > 3/31 (good)
- **Calcium:** 12.5 > 3/17 • normal > 3/31 (good)
- **ALP Liver Enzyme:** 4000 > 3/17 • 3025 > 3/31 (bad, but dropping; normal ALP = 200)

Wed 4/6/22 6:21pm : I remain in Libby Land till we find more sunlight. So far, she improves daily. Even shows interest in ransacking the litter box. She used to luv cat poop *tootsie rolls*. A dog thing. 🐶

Grady: If she eats them I see no problem.

Brenda: Don't wanna jinx things, but today Libby ate every bagel bite and 3 Dog Bakery treats I offered her.

Elijah: That's great news.

Thu 4/7/22 2:47pm: Pink Camo at this week's bandage change!

Elijah: She's looking good.

Thu 4/14/22 5:55pm: Ms Liberty Belle wears blue in coordinated camo accents. Liberty Belle Blue.

Emily: Queen. How's everyone doing?

Elijah: Mom said she's doing good. Dad doesn't text.

Brenda: My nonprofit, Kinship Circle, might send an animal response team to Poland/Ukraine for animal war victims.

4/16/22 LIBBY'S DESCENT

*Not expecting such a ricochet, but Libby's kidney values have risen to "dead dog walking" levels again. Dr. Lynch continues to tweak meds and fluids in hope we can drop in between last time's miraculous values and this time's horrible values.

- **Creatinine:** 3.5 > 3/31 • 5.0 > 4/16 (death)
- **BUN:** 64 > 3/31 • 102 > 4/16 (horrible)
- **SDMA:** 34 > 3/31 • 30 > 4/16 (improved)
- **Phosphorous:** 8.6 > 3/31 • 14.3 > 4/16 (bad!)
- **Potassium:** 6.6 > 3/31 • 7.7 > 4/16 (bad)
- **Calcium:** normal > 3/31 • normal > 4/16 (good)
- **ALP Liver Enzyme:** 3025 > 3/31 • 3000 > 4/16 (bad, but maintaining; normal ALP = 200)

*In hindsight, this marks the Final End of Libby. Unknown in this moment, we are just 7 days from death. Her body cannot negotiate the sudden, good drop in creatinine/BUN at last read, similar to Isaiah…

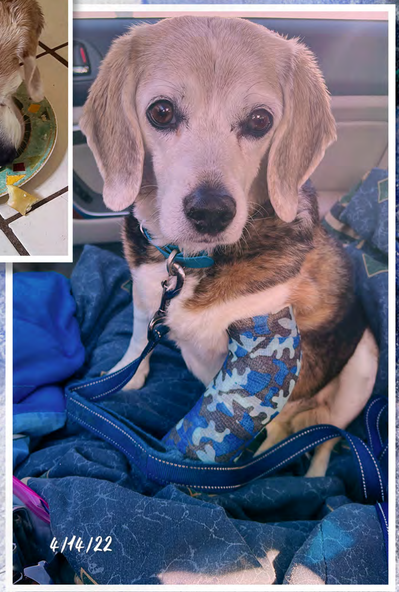
Sat 4/16/22 8:59pm: Sorry. I'm doing Libby's fluids, with one hand holding needle in her back. Didn't realize u swipe down right to get to flashlight screen. Thought u find that screen, then swipe down rt. ***Libby is very sick again.*** Did u see a.m. text, after Dr Lynch called?

Elijah: Yeah those values don't look good. How's she acting?

Emily: Shit I hope she's doing okay. Sorry the values keep changing.

Sat 4/16/22 630am: Even as you your trust surrenders into my lap, across my legs and in my arms, even as you willingly accept force-fed renal food, multiple meds, twice daily fluids – through the indignity of it all – you are only love. Only faith. Kisses ready. You pull your weary body from the ground to follow me room to room. Forever on watch, my angel. My friend. My sentinel. My Liberty Belle. And your body fails. The creatinine rises like a raging toxic river. Fuck you fate. That last hurrah, the amazing drop in kidney values. Why? Only to ricochet back to death levels? Why?

Before she falls



Thu 4/21/22 3:00pm LAST PHOTO TAKEN BEFORE THE DEATHS: Libby is in soft caste, without brace at bottom. Dr Anderson said she's healing beautifully and wants her to weight-bear on leg. So she moves more slowly as she adapts to weight-bearing. It's harder for her. She gets cast change in 2 wks and next x-ray in 4 wks, so this is a 12-weeker. Libby is calm in car, no shakes or hard pants. I bet her creatinine has already creeped down a bit from awful 5.0.

Elijah: Hi LIBBY! She's looking good. • **Emily:** GO LIBBY!
Brenda: If humans had tongues that hung outta their mouths and waggy tails – I bet White Christian Nationalism would not succeed. • **Elijah:** Dogs should rule the planet.

Thu 4/21/22 11:07pm The First Death: LIBBY IS DEAD. AS WE WATCHED TV SHE SAT UP COUGHED AND KEELED OVER. I COULDN'T SAVE HER LIBBY IS DEAD
Elijah: I'm sorry :(I am in shock. Are you 100% sure? • **Emily:** I am so, so sorry. I wish I knew what to say right now. She was so loved, you gave her such an amazing life.

Death x two

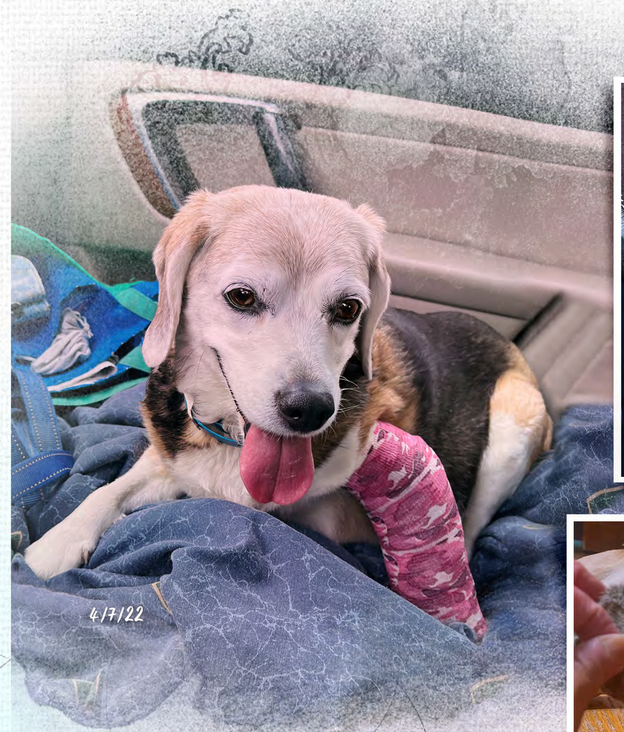
4/21/22 to 4/23/22: When "This Cant Be Happening" HAPPENS To Liberty Belle, Libby Schnibby, Libby Lulu, Wibby Wu, Libaya… Most beautiful beagle to rule this world. My Libby Wibby.
Our Sentinel. Our Eyes. Friend and Child.

Brenda: She's not dead. I did CPR; her eyes opened. She had a stroke, we think. Driving to VSS.
Emily: WHATTTTT? GO LIBBY!!!!!!!! • **Brenda:** She's unlikely to live.
Emily: Let Elijah know if he can call you, we don't want to intrude.
Elijah: But I would love to call if we can so let us know.

Fri 4/22/22 12:31am: We are still in VSS parking lot (Covid protocol) and spoke to ER vet once. Libby had cardiac event, stroke. Gums pale and jagged breathing. Can't stand or walk. Taking X-ray + blood and told us to wait for callback. She will have to stay night on life support and could die w/o me beside her. She's likely in final kidney failure and if doesn't die tonight will be in next few days. I am in shock cuz she was okay today. You saw pic I sent earlier.

Fri 4/22/22 2:04am Elijah: Any updates?
Brenda: She had a stroke. She appears to also be diabetic. There are malformations on lung x-ray, not masses like cancer but concern is blood clot. ER doc felt she'd survive night. I am paying for all myself. Dad outta question. Rushing home to call ER vet with list of Libby meds. She may live a little longer, but we're at end. I'll have to give her insulin shots too, for whatever time left.

3:00am: Are u up? Libby had heart attack. VSS shocked her; she's not dead. We are rushing back to VSS. I want to spend night in parking lot but Grady needs Uber home; we don't know how.



11

Libby is just

Fri 4/22/22 After 3:30am
Apr 21 here I am again Libby, in VSS lot. Hours after your Dr. Anderson appt this very afternoon. "Leg healing beautifully." May appointments; Cast change and 12-week x-ray. But you have a stroke tonight. You cough and cough then fall onto your side. Glassy eyed. I think ur dead. I scream your name: Libby Libby Libby. I do compressions and your eyes move. I feel pulse. Breath. Now you are back inside VSS with ashen gums.

We leave you at VSS, stable given context. ***VSS calls within minutes after home: You have a heart attack. Come right back, this is it, they say. I give permission over phone to use defibrillator. You revive because of course you do. Because you are Libby. You are breathing on your own, but in jagged spurts. I walk into VSS ICU. You stir, look into my eyes. Mommy is here. That's my mom. She'll fix this. She'll make me feel better. You seem so relieved to see me. I hold your head in my palms. I speak to you, pulling down my mask to breathe in your silky warm fur, alive. To memorize you. To hold your paw and stroke your chin. To memorize you. I whisper to you: Mommy and Etelah love you. Even Mabel too. Booker and Baby Noah. Dad. Dr. Lynch. I tell you that Ethel must need you, sooner rather than later. Sooner rather than later. I try to reconcile your bright, tongue-dangly face beside me just hours ago this day, as we drive home from Dr. Anderson appointment. Your leg thrives, carries on, bone bridges to bone and it becomes whole again. Why can't you become whole again?***

I promise you, just hours before this "cardiac event" that you'll walk with us again. Your leg is "healing beautifully" and you always rebound from kidney fluctuations. Surely you had enough time left to walk again, cast-free. That's why we made May appointment and beyond. You were expected to live longer. Not now. 11-yrs old. Not now.

I wait. Don't want to take your life impersonally at VSS. Want to hear Dr. Lynch, but unreachable. Don't know how to proceed. You will probably die before I have to make that decision, because you are Good Girl and don't want to burden me. That is your way. You are my Sentinel, which is why you've held on. ***It's agony to let go, for each of us Libby.***

Fri 4/22/22 8:33am Elijah: Did you figure out how to Uber?
Brenda: Grady and I both slept in VSS parking lot and drove home around 6:30am because Libby hadn't changed. Just 10% of all dogs are resuscitated by defibrillator. Another Libby hallmark. I spoke to Dr. Lynch: 1) Libby currently breathes on own (no tube) – but only inside oxygen cage. As they treat her, they will do tests to see if she can breathe outside oxygen cage. If she never regains ability to breathe w/o oxygen, she can not come home and must be life-erased at VSS. If she does breathe again on own, she can come home for eventual life-erase here, with Dr. Lynch. 2) We are also awaiting radiologist evaluation about blood clot(s) in lungs. If blood clots certain, won't survive outside oxygen cage. If Libby arrests again, I will not defib. They do manual CPR, like Isaiah, and she'll die on table as I drive to her.

Brenda to Dr. Lynch: Libby is admitted to VSS ICU. She more likely had a Vagus nerve seizure, triggered by coughing and her reduced breathing capacity. We left her "stable," given circumstances. VSS called minutes after home: Libby had cardiac arrest. I gave permission to use defibrillator. Her heart rate returned. I spent night in VSS parking lot, saw Libby 1 time. Head up, looking at me, pressed into my arms. But breathing jagged. Probably has blood clot in lung. I need to talk to you. I didn't want VSS to just euthanize w/o speaking to you. Radiologist has NOT yet looked at x-rays. If she doesn't die first, I get call 9:00-11:00 with more input about tests done so far.

4/21/22 Last photo of Libby alive.

4/21/22 Known per Dr. Ozment:

- **Creatinine:** 5.0 > 4/16 • 5.1 > 4/21
- **BUN:** 102 > 4/16 • 94 > 4/21
- **Phosphorous:** 14.3 > 4/16
  Too high to read > 4/21
- **Potassium:** 7.7 > 4/16 • 8.0 > 4/21
- **Calcium:** normal > 4/16
  No read > 4/21
- **ALP Liver Enzyme:** 3000 > 4/16
  Too high to read > 4/21
- **ALT Liver Enzyme:** 151 > 4/21
- **Packed Red Blood Cells (PVC?):**
  27% > 4/21 (anemic)
- **Blood Glucose:** 453 > 4/21
- **Blood Ketones High:** 4.6 > 4/21
- **Chest Xray:** Areas of consolidation or bruising. No masses. Concern is blood clot to lung.

Libby is in oxygen room jagged breathing on own, IV flush. I'm paying for VSS myself, without Grady's help. If insulin shots + IV helps her at all, I'll do it. The main lab results + radiologist report, urinalysis… don't come till tomorrow. Tho Libby can't stand or walk (already difficult today due to soft caste + new weight bearing status) - she held her head up, alert, and looking at me when I left VSS. I know you don't work till Mon, but unsure if Libby will be alive + I need help proceeding for her.

4/22/22 Brenda to Dr. Lynch: Dr. K speaks quickly. This is paraphrased, sparse. He tried to call you, left vm. I had to okay Addison's test on my own, cause their lab closes in hour. He thinks this may be cause of potassium spike.

- **Creatinine:** 5.1 > 4/21 • 5.9 > 4/22
- **BUN:** 94 > 4/21 • 94 > 4/22
- **Phosphorous:** Too high to read > 4/21
  Too high to read > 4/22
- **Potassium:** 8.0 > 4/21 • 7.1 > 4/22
- **Calcium:** No read > 4/21 • No read > 4/22
- **ALP Liver Enzyme:** Too high to read > 4/21
  Too high to read > 4/22
- **ALT Liver Enzyme:** 151 > 4/21 • 151 > 4/22
- **Packed Red Blood Cells (PVC?):**
  27% > 4/21 & 4/22 (anemic)
- **Blood Glucose:** 453 > 4/21 • 195 > 4/22

ULTRASOUND

- **LIVER:** Large cavitory mass in liver, a tumor. Apparently her last-Aug ultrasound showed a 2-cm nodule (I was NOT told this) that is now 6-cm nodule. **Libby has liver cancer.**
- **PANCREAS:** Enlarged pancreas lymph nodes
- **ADRENALS:** Both glands enlarged

"Not able to make sense out of potassium level. In dogs, potassium doesn't always spike from kidney disease." Addison's = body doesn't make enuf steroids." He's doing ACTH Stimulation Test.

ECHOCARDIOGRAM

- No pulmonary hypertension; no evidence of blot clot thrown to lungs.
- **Heart disease/high pressure:** Causing heart to work harder.
- **New Cardiac Med:** Vetmedin
- **Amlodipine Dose:** 1 tab 2X daily

Fri 4/22/22 A Blur From 8:30am Forward, Last Day Before Gone

Elijah: How are u feeling?

Brenda: Floating. Not real. It is hard for me to express the primal love I have for these animal kids. It's just who I am. I'm not allowing hope about anything. She just endured a fucking heart attack. But ER doctor who called this a.m. felt she had a "cardiac event" separate from kidney disease. We might be able to prevent recurrence through cardiac meds. She undergoes echocardiogram and ultrasound tests later today. To be clear, if her blood does not regain ability to fully oxygenate, she must be euthanized at VSS. My only hope is for Dr. Lynch to euthanize her at home, with her family.

Brenda: It's anemia caused by end-stage renal failure that makes her not breathe outside oxygen cage. That caused last night's cardiac arrest. Her red blood cells can't oxygenate enuf to breathe. That's a crude explanation, but my mind is shot. She is unlikely to survive this. I'll do 3-4 day hospital on IV flush, meds I already paid for, but it's unlikely we can euthanize her at home. Because she's in oxygen chamber, she stands, drinks, eyes wide open. I've never had to life-erase a dog this way. Even Grady thinks it's too horrible to imagine. But if we took her home – not breathing outside oxygen chamber – she'd cardiac arrest and stop breathing right there in the car. The ER vet seems to think if we get her renal values even a bit better, she might breathe on her own. Dr. Lynch disagrees; she thinks the anemia/red blood cell event is irreversible, short of a miracle.

To Grady: Please leave out bags, plastic wraps… should I have to wrap Libby for freezer preservation on my own. She can't sit here all day, dead. Lastly, all above is already paid for. Please don't make our Sentinel's last moments alive about $$.

To Christy: Our Sentinel. Our Eyes (And Nose). Our Liberty Belle… Just yesterday afternoon, I drove Libby home from VSS (Veterinary Specialty Services) where she had her 8-wk leg xray. "Bones healing beautifully," Dr. Anderson said. We made May appointments for last cast change, then removal. We had no reason to think, just yesterday afternoon, she wouldn't live to walk again, cast-free.

To Family Chat, Fri 4/22/22 2:02pm: At 4:00pm happy Libby was "healing beautifully" and in a new soft caste for weight-bearing. Hours later, Libby had a stroke and heart attack. I okayed AED defibrillator and she resuscitated (tho this only works in 10% of dogs; a warrior to the end). Libby is in an oxygen cage at ER. She can breathe, but only if in this chamber. If she never regains breathing outside chamber, I have to euthanize her at ER. If she does breathe on own, I can bring her home to die with her family and Dr. Lynch. If she cardiac arrests again, I will not defib. This could happen any moment. In the meantime, she's actually sitting up, drinking water, alert. If you've ever loved an animal kid, you know I am in a special kind of hellish agony.

Still, I revere this little dog who wants to live against all odds. The ER vets and Dr. Lynch say they've rarely seen a dog like Libby.

Fri 4/22/22 3:00pm Cara: What does Dr. Lynch think you should do?

Brenda: FYI: There is no pulmonary edema or evidence of clot in lungs. She had a **vagus nerve seizure when coughing to clear her airways last night**, then cardiac arrest. Dr. Lynch is going day at a time with me, and thinks it's okay to do the 3-4 day hospitalization, even if it results in her euthanasia there at VSS. That is if she even survives 3-4 days without another heart attack. Because of covid protocols, I cannot even visit her – other than to come inside for euthanasia.

Cara: Is she in pain? Poor girl. I'm so sorry you can't be there. Was it a stroke?

Brenda: She did *not* have a stroke. More likely a **vagus nerve seizure, brought on by renal-failure induced severe anemia (red blood cells cannot oxygenate adequately)**. She coughed to clear her airways in effort to breathe and passed out from coughing, followed by later cardiac arrest. She is not in pain, more discomfort. I cancelled my Sunday aerobics class. She'll likely be euthanized any time from Sun-Wed, if she doesn't die first from second cardiac arrest related to final renal failure. If VSS calls me after-hours – she's dead. Mandy died a year ago around same time, in early May. I'm unable to sleep or eat, and can't cry either. Walking zombie at this moment.

Cara: So sorry. I know this is very hard.
Brenda: We had 4 dogs a year and half ago, now down to 2. Etelah is disoriented. She is indescribably bound to Libby.

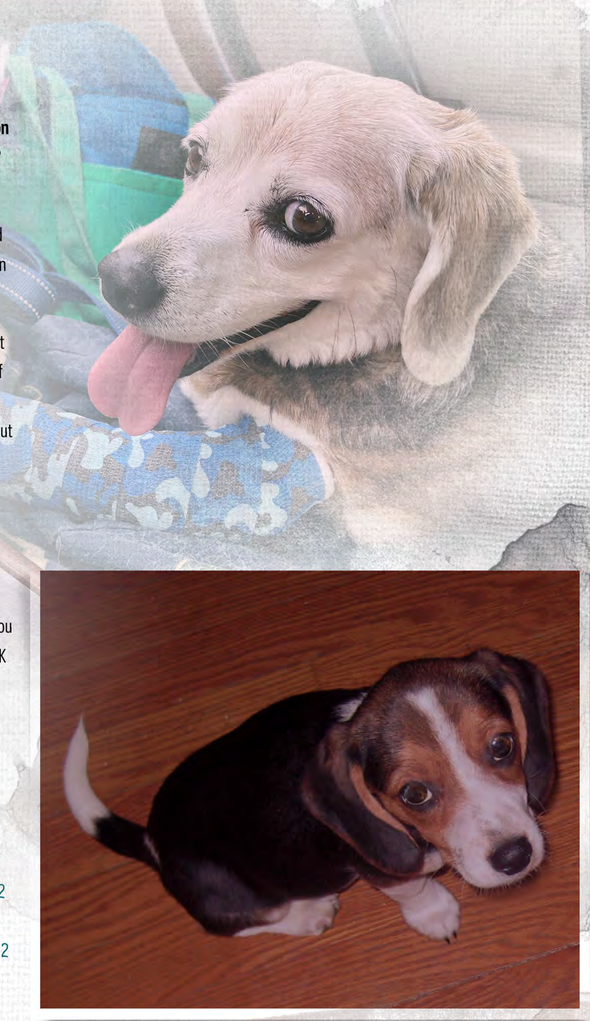
4/23/22 LIBBY DIES TWICE > Later This Day, Congestive Heart Failure To Dr. Lynch: At 2.5 days on IV flush: Creatinine down full point; potassium down too. But I forgot to ask about Packed Red Blood Cells (anemia). He didn't bring that up and he's kinda all over the place, semi-lecturing me on quality-of-life, etc. I finally told him: If we are blessed with Libby's homecoming, I work with Dr. Lynch daily, re: euthanasia.

- **Libby still cannot breathe outside oxygen chamber.** How tragic for her kidneys to rally, yet still euthanize at VSS. I can't even think about it.
- **Can you pls check red blood cell oxygenation capacity** when you see actual report and tell me?
- **Blood glucose rose from 195 yesterday to 200-300.** Insulin injections begin today. I'd need you to monitor glucose weekly to see when/if I can stop – if she comes home & lives that long.
- **Tube Feed:** VSS refuses to force-feed and won't let me do it there. They will try tube-feed today. If Libby shows physical distress signs, they'll stop. I am afraid this could cause cardiac arrest again - but she has to eat. *(It probably did cause arrest).*
- Cardiac Med: Vetmedin
- Amlodipine Dose: Full tablet 2X daily
- Insulin Shots: if blood glucose stays elevated

4/23/22 LIBBY'S LAST READ: Dr. Lynch, can you please tell me any *missing values* below, that Dr. K neglected to report?

- **Creatinine:** 5.9 > 4/22 • 4.8 > 4/23
- **BUN:** 94 > 4/22 • No record > 4/23
- **Phosphorous:** Too high to read > 4/22
  No record > 4/23
- **Potassium:** 7.1 > 4/22 • 5.2 > 4/23
- **Calcium:** No read > 4/22 • No read > 4/23
- **ALP Liver Enzyme:** Too high to read > 4/22
  No record > 4/23
- **ALT Liver Enzyme:** 151 > 4/21 • 151 > 4/22
  No record > 4/23
- **Packed Red Blood Cells:**
  27% > 4/21 & 4/22 (anemic)
  No record > 4/23
- **Blood Glucose:** 453 > 4/21 • 195 > 4/22
  Rose again to 200-300 range > 4/23

4/23/22 In hours before second cardiac arrest, to Cara: (PCV) and Hematocrit (calculated red blood cell count) gauge kidneys' erythotoein – a hormone that tells bone marrow: Make more red blood cells. If this hormone fails, bone marrow can't make enough red blood cells. Erythotoein is compromised in end-stage renal disease. So while kidney values may improve, this hormone relies on recovery or failure of a specific kidney cortex. Libby's creatinine has beautifully dropped from 5.9 to 4.8, and her potassium is down from 7.1 to 5.2 – but her red blood cell configuration can't catch up.



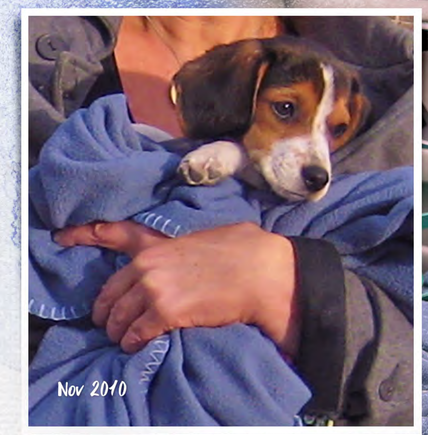
The Little Beagle Who Could

Sat 4/23/22 LAST WRITING BEFORE DEATH, 3:00pm: *It never dawns on me that Libby will do anything less than: Defy all scientific odds. Live another 2-3 years like Dr. Lynch's American Eskimo. Lug around that creatinine-load, shrugging off numbers. Carrying on. So I adjust at every corner. Okay, Libby gets daily fluids. Fluids rise from 200ml per day. Then 300ml… To finally 400ml. Two times daily. You adjust too. At first, disoriented but stoic. A needle is never fun. Panting. Shakes. Fidgeting. A needle dislodges. Water squirts. We stick again. You never snap at me. Never so much as growl.* **Your acceptance of all things, daunting. The Best Girl on the Entire Planet Earth. You often cover my face in kisses. Your way to say: It's okay mom. I guess we gotta do these things. In death: The bond grows deeper. In death, you and I become inextricably bound.**

Sat 4/23/22 LAST WRITING: Eternal threads. A woven wall. In death, I cannot let you die. Because if I do, my breath stops too. By the end, our teamwork is evident. I lift you onto the rimless orthopedic bed. Belly down. Legs splayed behind you, frog style. You memorize the position and lay, still as a quiet pond. I sit on the floor, pressed against you. Massage loose folds of your furry neck, sides and rear. Once done, I smooth the subcutaneous fluid lumps into your body. You like the rubdowns.

Your eyes. Lightways into mine. **Libby, it never occurs to me you'll be any other dog than That Miracle Dog. It never occurs to me you'll crash and die.** Before your next birthday. Before your cast comes off. Before you lead our walks again. "Just let her heal, she'll come back in Libby time," Elijah says. Because you always do. Weeks before death, your creatinine drops to 3.5, BUN is a remarkable 64. Weeks before death, strong Libby - The Tank, The Sentinel, The Army Sargent – carries on with the business of staying alive. Because of course you do. You are Libby.

So when movements slow, tremors stop – not from healing, but a body too battered to shake – I compartmentalize fear. Stash it in drawers for later. When your cast gallops – that pull me over curbs, across streets, far and away – stop, I stuff my horror. It's your leg. Something else. It's anything but a slide into death. Anything.



Until that night. Daily force-feeds, meds, fluids, teeth brushings, cleanups are done. We gather in the bedroom to watch TV: Libby, Puppy, Booker, Baby Noah, Mabel, mom, dad. You sit up to cough. You've coughed all your life. Reverse sneezes, allergies. I dab water onto your lips and nose, which usually stops the cough. But these coughs grow rhythmic and loud. Desperate. Rising. Until you fall on to your side. Motionless. Eyes glassy. Body like a bean bag. Your breath, invisible. LIBBY IS DEAD, I scream. I am floating above anything real. I cannot feel my legs. LIBBY IS DEAD, I screech in some voice I do not know. I don't know the lines. I have no script for this. LIBBY IS DEAD. I blindly compress the place I believe to be your heart. Your eyes move. A pulse is evident. Stroke? Seizure? We are driving to VSS even before I know where I am. Floating.

Hours later we leave you at VSS, stable. But once home, we get The Call. Libby's in cardiac arrest. Do you want CPR? YES. Should we defibrillate? YES. Just 10% of all dogs resuscitate by AED defibrillator. But you come back. Because you are Libby.

The Little Beagle Who Could

Now in this space – barely here on planet Earth before erased forever – you live in an oxygen cage at VSS. I wait, purposeless, without meaning, for each VSS call. Though your eyes are open, you can sit up, drink water. It's only in that chamber. With oxygen flow to sustain your breath. If we take you out, cardiac arrest occurs before we leave VSS parking lot. My hopes explode into one last wish: Can I bring you home to die with family? With Etelah beside you. All of us around you. Can I bring you home for another week of goodbyes? Another week for the weight of your being, pressed into my lap. Another week to whisper words into velvet, your Floppy Ears.

Maybe. Doctors who barely know you search for new ways. Because *you are not like other dogs.* "Libby didn't read the handbook," Dr. Lynch says each time you defy science. But by day #3, 4/23/22, your breath is ragged. You cannot exist outside an oxygen chamber. Your creatinine rises 5.0, 5.1, 5.9. Then drops to 4.8. I await the call. Will it rise again? Probably, as your body refuses to defy the odds any longer.

You have LIVER CANCER. It barely registers. Your cast never comes off. You never walk again. No one tells your leg about the rest of you. Your leg does its job. "Heals beautifully." Your leg is ready to live. No one tells your leg about the rest of you.

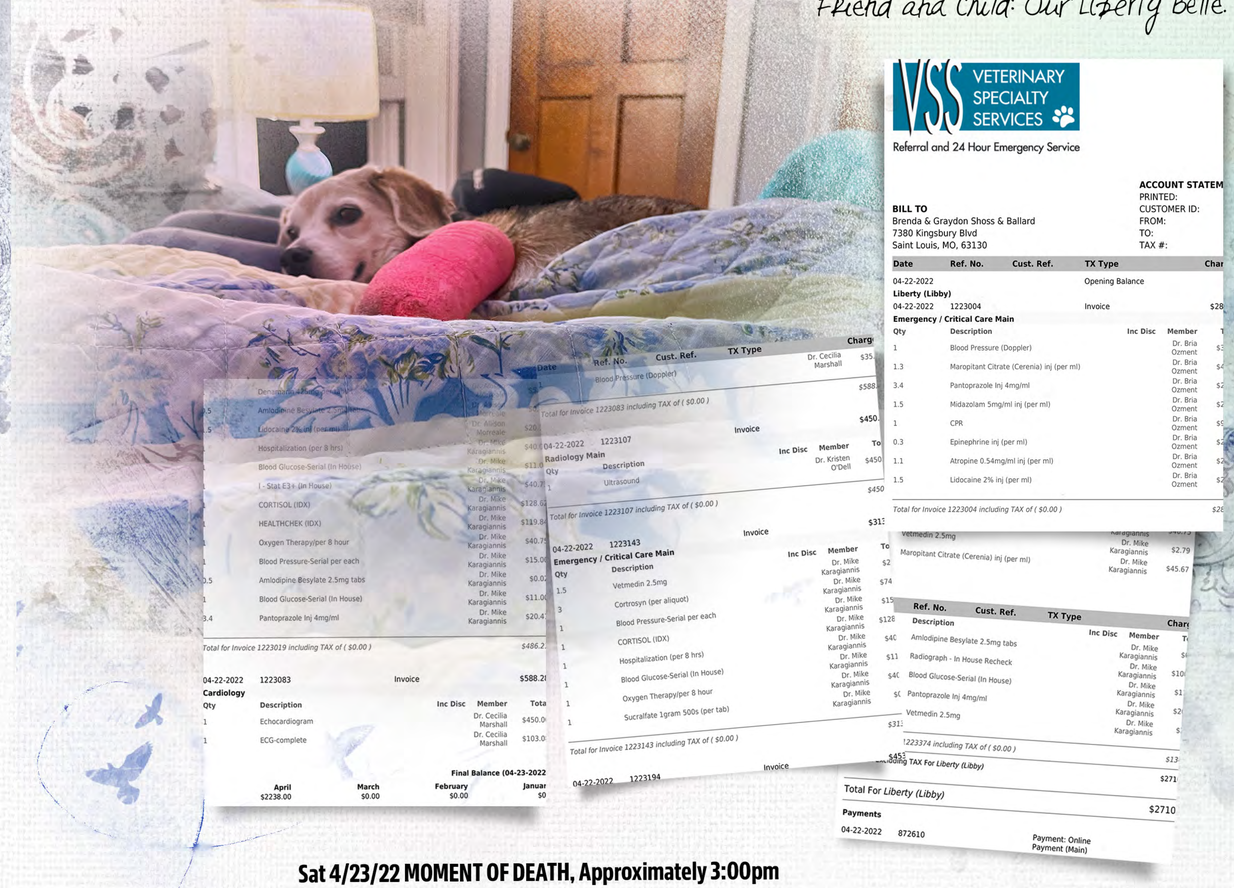
Sat 4/23/22 LAST WRITING BEFORE DEATH: By Monday, Tuesday. Wednesday at latest, we'll have to ERASE Your Life at VSS? Inside that chamber. Where you mimic life? Hold up your head, stare into our eyes? Rest your head in my hands? I am expected to ERASE Your Life as you seem so alive? This is, by miles and miles, the most wretched, horror-filled and terrifying thing. This is the ONLY part I do not know how to do. I am floating, the ground beneath me is dark swirls. If I fall, the drop is endless. **EACH DAY YOU ARE NO MORE, erasure continues. The absence of pulse. The absence of warm weight. Your kisses. Your eyes locked into mine. Every inch of fur, gone. Your paws. Your floppy ears. Your teeth and lips. Each day you are no more.**

Gone

Libby, I can't imagine. I can't see myself in a time without you. I don't even understand. I am so sick. Not even 12 years old. Just 11. The youngest among my old dogs to leave. What Evil Fate wrote this script? This is the cruelest of partings. I kiss your head, your nose, eyes and lips. **I love you without boundaries. Wide as the sky. Liberty Belle.**

This can't happen. Until it does.

Our Sentinel. Our Eyes (And Nose). Friend and Child: Our Liberty Belle.



VSS VETERINARY SPECIALTY SERVICES
Referral and 24 Hour Emergency Service

ACCOUNT STATEM
PRINTED:
CUSTOMER ID:
FROM:
TO:
TAX #:

BILL TO
Brenda & Graydon Shoss & Ballard
7380 Kingsbury Blvd
Saint Louis, MO, 63130

Date	Ref. No.	Cust. Ref.	TX Type	Char
04-22-2022			Opening Balance	
Liberty (Libby)				
04-22-2022	1223004		Invoice	$28

Emergency / Critical Care Main

Qty	Description	Inc Disc	Member	T
1	Blood Pressure (Doppler)		Dr. Bria Ozment	$3
1.3	Maropitant Citrate (Cerenia) inj (per ml)		Dr. Bria Ozment	$4
3.4	Pantoprazole Inj 4mg/ml		Dr. Bria Ozment	$2
1.5	Midazolam 5mg/ml inj (per ml)		Dr. Bria Ozment	$2
1	CPR		Dr. Bria Ozment	$5
0.3	Epinephrine inj (per ml)		Dr. Bria Ozment	$2
1.1	Atropine 0.54mg/ml inj (per ml)		Dr. Bria Ozment	$2
1.5	Lidocaine 2% inj (per ml)		Dr. Bria Ozment	$2

Total for Invoice 1223004 including TAX of ($0.00) $28

Vetmedin 2.5mg — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $2.79
Maropitant Citrate (Cerenia) inj (per ml) — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $45.67

Ref. No.	Cust. Ref.	TX Type	Char
Description		Inc Disc	Member
Amlodipine Besylate 2.5mg tabs			Dr. Mike Karagiannis
Radiograph - In House Recheck			Dr. Mike Karagiannis
Blood Glucose-Serial (In House)			Dr. Mike Karagiannis
Pantoprazole Inj 4mg/ml			Dr. Mike Karagiannis
Vetmedin 2.5mg			Dr. Mike Karagiannis

Total for Invoice 1223374 including TAX of ($0.00) $13
Total For Liberty (Libby) $271

Payments
04-22-2022 872610 Payment: Online Payment (Main) $2710

Total for Invoice 1223107 including TAX of ($0.00) $450

04-22-2022 1223107 — Invoice
Radiology Main
Ultrasound — Dr. Kristen O'Dell — $450

Total for Invoice 1223143 including TAX of ($0.00)

04-22-2022 1223143 — Invoice
Emergency / Critical Care Main
Vetmedin 2.5mg — Dr. Mike Karagiannis
Cortrosyn (per aliquot) — Dr. Mike Karagiannis
Blood Pressure-Serial per each — Dr. Mike Karagiannis
CORTISOL (IDX) — Dr. Mike Karagiannis
Hospitalization (per 8 hrs) — Dr. Mike Karagiannis
Blood Glucose-Serial (In House) — Dr. Mike Karagiannis
Oxygen Therapy/per 8 hour — Dr. Mike Karagiannis
Sucralfate 1gram 500s (per tab) — Dr. Mike Karagiannis

Total for Invoice 1223083 including TAX of ($0.00) $588.2

04-22-2022 1223083 — Invoice
Cardiology
Echocardiogram — Dr. Cecilia Marshall — $450.0
ECG-complete — Dr. Cecilia Marshall — $103.0

Final Balance (04-23-2022)

April	March	February	Januar
$2238.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0

Total for Invoice 1223019 including TAX of ($0.00) $486.2

04-22-2022 1223019 — Invoice
Cardiology
Amlodipine Besylate 2.5mg tabs — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $15.0
Blood Glucose-Serial (In House) — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $0.0
Pantoprazole Inj 4mg/ml — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $20.4
Blood Pressure-Serial per each — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $40.7
Oxygen Therapy/per 8 hour — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $119.8
HEALTHCHEK (IDX) — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $128.6
CORTISOL (IDX) — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $11.0
Hospitalization (per 8 hrs) — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $40.7
Blood Glucose-Serial (In House) — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $13.0
(Stat E3+ (In House) — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $40.7
Amlodipine Besylate 2.5mg tabs — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $40.0
Hospitalization (per 8 hrs) — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $20.0
Blood Glucose-Serial (In House) — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $40.0
Oxygen Therapy/per 8 hour — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $13.0
Sucralfate 1gram 500s (per tab) — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $40.7
Dermatophilus Bacterin — Dr. Mike Karagiannis — $20.0

Sat 4/23/22 MOMENT OF DEATH, Approximately 3:00pm

On the same day your creatinine falls from 5.9 to 4.8, your potassium down from 7.1 to 5.2 - I dare to hope you can come home. On the same day you seem to improve, you die. In a matter of minutes. Your lungs fill with fluid, but still a heart rate. CPR begins. But the heart stops. You die, as Grady and I frantically tear down Hwy 40 (just like Isaiah). You die, as I prepare for your homecoming. You die as I tell Etelah she'll see you one more time. Congestive heart failure. A flood in the lungs. You die as I type out your new meds. You literally die as I'm on the phone discussing next steps with Dr. Lynch.

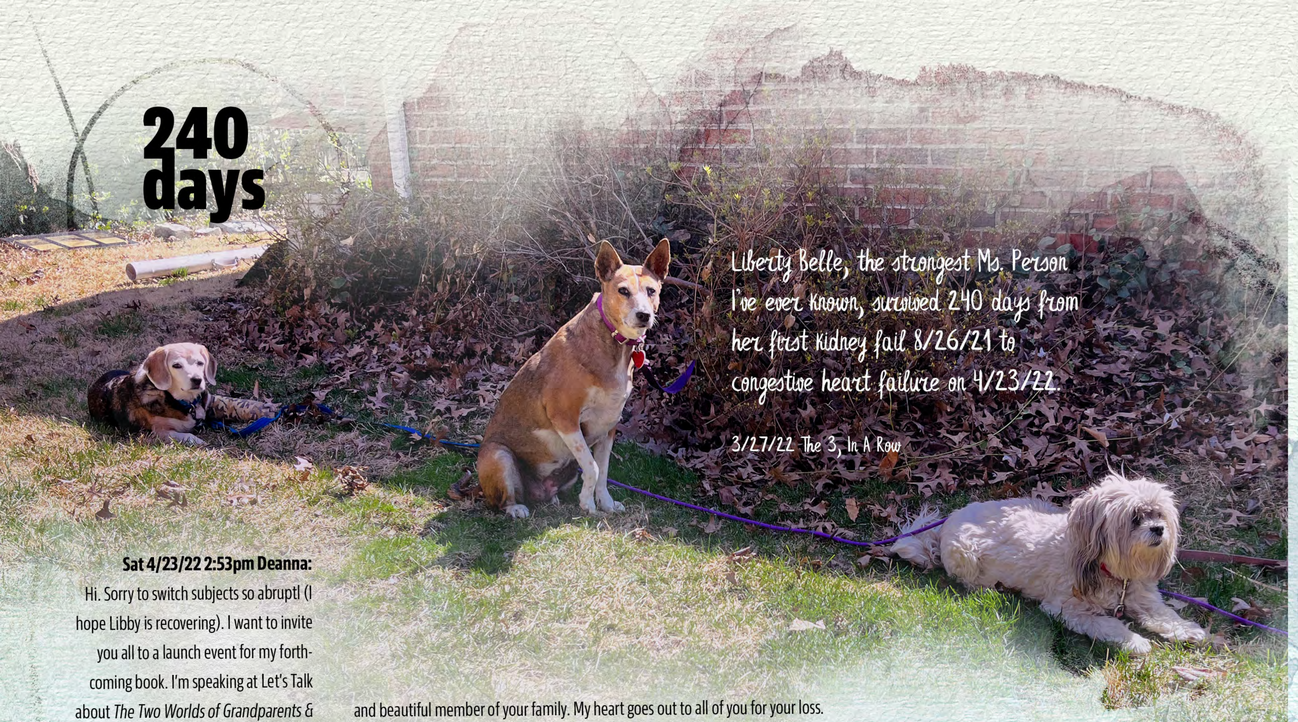
YOU DIE BEFORE WE CAN TELL YOU WE LOVE YOU BEYOND REASON. AND GOODBYE.

Libby, Mommy is here. Ethel, Mommy is here. For you both. Till my very last breath.

I know each strand on Libby's body. I brush teeth, clean ears, de-matte dusty beagle fur, fix boo boos… across the days of her life. I struggle tremendously with absence. How each day without them relies on past memories, instead of new ones. Until one day, the absence is longer than their presence. Actually, I never "get over" any of them. Just a whole lotta time makes the pain less wretched.

Tears do not come. I'm in shock. My last months are round-clock force-feeds, fluids, meds, carrying you when unable to walk. Dog food is stuck in my hair; I don't even know it. Every minute = Saving Libby. I'm disoriented; it's time to start meds, to force feed – but you're gone.

240 days



Liberty Belle, the strongest Ms. Person I've ever known, survived 240 days from her first kidney fail 8/26/21 to congestive heart failure on 4/23/22.

3/27/22 The 3, In A Row

Sat 4/23/22 2:53pm Deanna: Hi. Sorry to switch subjects so abrupt! (I hope Libby is recovering). I want to invite you all to a launch event for my forthcoming book. I'm speaking at Let's Talk about *The Two Worlds of Grandparents & Grandchildren*. Would you like to attend? www.linkdin.com/video/event/urn:li:ugcPost:6908165247757385728

Brenda: Libby is DEAD. Moments ago before we could reach her to say goodbye. CPR stopped. Libby is dead.

Deanna: I'm so sorry, Brenda.
Victoria Ballard: I'm sorry Brenda.

Brenda: Grady is distraught too. We're walking into VSS toretrieve her body.
Cara: Brenda, Grady, Elijah, I'm so sorry for your loss. Libby was a loving and beautiful member of your family. My heart goes out to all of you for your loss. RIP sweet Libby. • **Adam Klass:** So sorry for your loss.

Brenda: Her leg had healed perfectly. I didn't want her buried in cast. Libby is dead. Sorry if pic offends anyone. • **Elijah:** Goodbye my furry friend.

Cara: Sweet girl. She looks very peaceful there. I hope that brings you some measure of comfort. I know it did when Mae passed. • **Victoria:** What I can do for you guys!
Sammy: Libby was amazing until the very end. You were blessed to have more special time with her. I wish you happy memories and send condolences, sympathy, love. Mom .

Brenda: I just cut tufts of her fur to save and wrapped my baby in a blanket inside a zipped bag, for preservation till burial. I don't even feel real at moment. I kept waiting for her eyes to flutter open. • **Cara:** So sorry. That sounds very difficult.

Sammy: The joy of loving an animal always ends with sadness. We know this, but we always remember the great joy as well. Rest In Peace, Libby. What can I do for you Brenda???? Love always MOM

Sat 4/23/22 6:13pm AFTER DEATH Cara: I'm so sorry. She held out as long as she could. Sweet angel. How is Mabel right now? Those two had issues .

4/28/22 "I claim this bed now, but honestly, I am confused without Her."

Brenda: Mabel is confused. She stood down to Libby's alpha bullying her full life. Libby started fights; Mabel is stronger. Mabel thinks she still can't go in once gated areas. She won't step over imaginary lines.

Cara: Oh wow. I didn't realize Libby started the fights.
Brenda: Puppy, on other hand, is glued to my feet.
Cara: Poor Mabel. Hope she gets used to free roaming now. Aw, Etelah misses her sister.

Brenda: Libby definitely enjoyed alpha status in the 4-pack. She used to hold Mandy in the grip of her Beagle Mind Meld. She'd close in on Mandy's big Ewok face, nose-to-nose, and silently stare into Mandy's eyes. Mandy coulda backed away, but she was glued in place. Motionless, Libby stared. Mandy did the snarl-tooth growl. Grady and I timed Mind Melds. They were the funniest thing I've seen in my life!

Cara: Libby badass! How are the cats dealing with it?
Brenda: Booker sat with Libby's body the longest. We lay out the gone animals, for the others to understand. Puppy was confused. Mabel, kinda scared. I carried Baby Noah down, but Libby sometimes ambushed him. Booker laid down next to Libby longest.
Cara: I remember having Mae come see Boo's body after she died. She was confused too.

Brenda: We think Puppy believes Libby will come home. Oh the joy Etelah felt when Libs felt a little better, had energy. When Libby led the way, even in

In death, her cast is finally removed.
Though Libby never walks again,
her leg has healed perfectly

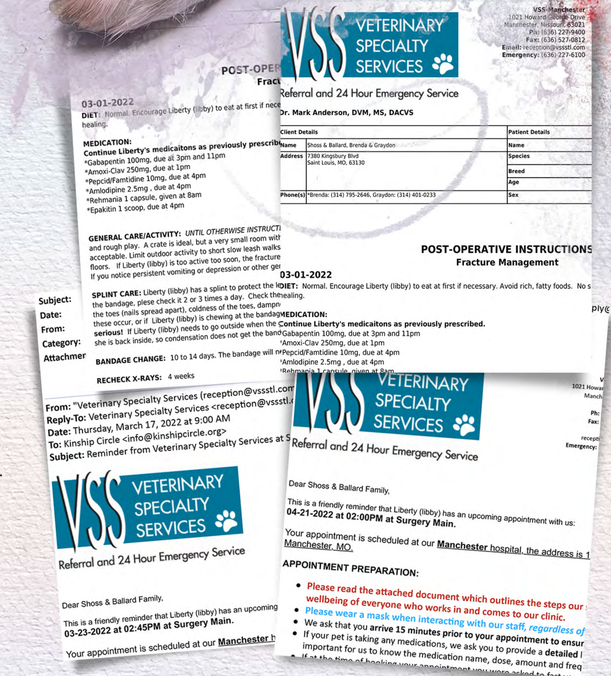
her cast, Puppy would pounce and twirl around her. Puppy has always been Libby's #1 Fangirl. I am worried about Etelah in coming days, when Libby never returns.
Cara: This is a tough adjustment for her. I know that must have been a sad night for all of you.

Sat 4/23/22 6:30pm Emily: Rest in peace baby Libby. She was so sweet, didn't deserve that broken leg. I know the other animals are already missing her.
Brenda: But lest we forget, Libby *starts* fights. Mabel is *stronger*. Libby is the sweetest, most cooperative and loving girl in all things – except Mabel. I'm not ready to use past tense…

Sat 4/23/22 6:45pm: Libby was at ER hospital, after cardiac arrest 4/21. She actually responded to AED defib, was alive, and today her kidney values had improved enuf that Grady and I cautiously hoped we could bring her home to die here with her pack. But despite her hopeful kidney values, by 4:00pm her lungs aspirated with fluid and she died of congestive heart failure – before Grady and I could reach her. So we didn't get to tell her we love her beyond reason and goodbye in that final moment. Kinda feel sick right now. But I know you are a beagle person, so I'm grieving by sending anyone who might care evidence of Libby's life as the most beautiful being. Wiggles has those gorgeous beagle brown eyes, like Libby…

Ron Presley: Wigs died in my arms of CHF, damn it was tough. So sorry you lost her. I'm sure you and Grady gave her the best life possible. I can close my eyes and relive the loss of each of them. Way more intense than the loss of a person. They're closest I'll ever have to children.

Brenda: I'm involuntarily bound to each, the default parent. I'd definitely get custody of each animal kid, in the event of divorce. It's nice to know someone else who understands when I say the loss of each animal kid, especially those who die too young, is the deepest grief in my life. Deeper than losing a parent or other human. I'm sure the loss of Grady or Elijah would kill me, but in my life so far, no grief has exceeded the loss of an animal child.
Ron: Same. Only my brother was close to the loss of my pets.



VSS VETERINARY SPECIALTY SERVICES
Referral and 24 Hour Emergency Service

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS
Fracture Management

03-01-2022

DIET: Normal. Encourage Liberty (libby) to eat at first if necessary. Avoid rich, fatty foods. No s healing.

MEDICATION:
Continue Liberty's medicaitons as previously prescribed.
•Gabapentin 100mg, due at 3pm and 11pm
•Amoxi-Clav 250mg, due at 1pm
•Pepcid/Famtidine 10mg, due at 4pm
•Amlodipine 2.5mg , due at 4pm
•Rehmania 1 capsule, given at 8am

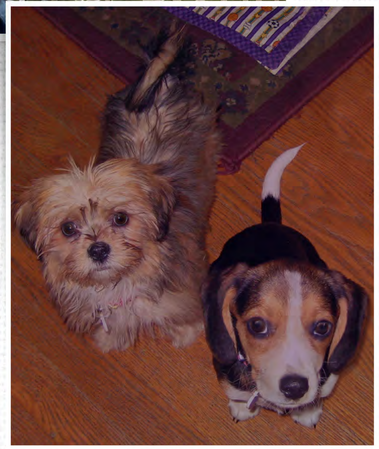
Dear Shoss & Ballard Family,

This is a friendly reminder that Liberty (libby) has an upcoming appointment with us:
04-21-2022 at 02:00PM at Surgery Main.

Your appointment is scheduled at our Manchester hospital, the address is 1
Manchester, MO.

APPOINTMENT PREPARATION:

- Please read the attached document which outlines the steps our wellbeing of everyone who works in and comes to our clinic.
- Please wear a mask when interacting with our staff, regardless of
- We ask that you arrive 15 minutes prior to your appointment to ensur
- If your pet is taking any medications, we ask you to provide a detailed l important for us to know the medication name, dose, amount and freq



Liberty Belle (Libby)
Born 8/1/10
Died 4/23/22
Just weeks before her
cast comes off.
Rest in mischief, plotting,
loyalty and love. Libby style.

Brenda: Libby was 11, youngest of seniors to die. I hate when they die out of order. Mabel (from Thailand) is older, guesstimated 12. Libby died less than a year after Mandy (Lhasa). As my babies age together, one leaves after another. A year ago our dog pack tallied 4; now we're down to 2 (Mabel and Lhasa-Maltese Etelah). Surviving dogs are disoriented. Part of my grief is seeing their grief. Myy orange cat Booker sat with Libby's body for a long time, before we preserved her for burial.

Ron: I try to space my two out now. Noodle is 3 and Smokey is 10.

Brenda: *Smart*. I didn't think about this when each individual came into my life: Mandy, Libby, Etelah (Ethel before her, horribly killed by speeding car) and Mabel. Grady is done. He doesn't want to go thru this again. What he doesn't know is I've already asked my vet (who has a rescue sanctuary) to watch for any beagle pups as we head into summer. Trying to figure out how I'll hide the beaglet from Grady for a bit – but, details…

Ron: You'll get away with it.

Sun 4/24/22 3:28am: Grady left me alone all night. Then he screamed at me about ER bill, even tho I paid for entire thing. He deals with grief through rage. No more said. Sorry. Just thank *you*, for giving me a place to to confront a big and frightening grief…

Cara: Oh no. Sorry. That's really tough. You're right that everyone deals with grief in different ways. I know it helps to talk about it and look at photos. I hope your other fur babies provide comfort too.

Sun 4/24/22 3:48pm Cara: Hi. Checking in.

Brenda: I started to feel something terrible and it came out of me as very primal screaming. I am cataloging photos and coding. I am doing everything possible to be numb. I can't do it yet. It's very dark,

Cara: It's ok. There's no set timeline for this.

Brenda: As soon as I am not concentrating, I keep seeing her in every spot. She was never out of my sight from the moment diagnosed with kidney disease… to especially once she had broken leg. No matter where I walk I try not to step on her. Nothing this dark since Ethel.

Cara: You are going through withdrawal. With each pet lost I saw them in the house for awhile. Give yourself grace…

Brenda: I am somewhere else. I hope I snap out of it. I only think of Libby's schedule: Ulcer med hour before food; force-feed; 8 meds; sub-cu; at least 6 guided walks… I keep feeling late, and confused. So I do nothing. I have to wake up, for the others. It's a strange state.

Cara: I understand what you're saying. She just passed yesterday. Again, please give yourself some grace here to be in whatever state you're in.

Brenda: I don't believe grief has endpoints. That's a societal construct. I still grieve Ethel, and others, and will till I take my last breath. It evolves, in terms of how much it paralyzes me. But that get-over-it notion is a construct, especially in American culture. ***With Libby, I am still in her "living" part; feeling confused cuz I have to do all my nursing tasks with her.*** Anyway, Thank you for being there.

Sun 4/25/22, Libby and Ethel - No More.

Erased forever. Libby and Ethel look like two live gumdrops. I wheel them around in a cat stroller. Don't know how I function amid so much cute.

I am so fucked up, filled with rage at someone? Fate? God? Puppy Mills? FUCKING 11-YEARS OLD! ER vet at her admittance 4/21 happened to have a beagle named Libby. 14-years old. Nothing wrong. Trudging along. A woman spoke to me outside VSS during one of Libby's cast change appointments. How old is your beagle, she asked about my Libby, with me on the sidewalk. 11, I replied. I have a beagle who is 16-years old. God fuck-you damn it.

Promise Of A Walk

Liberty is robbed. Her years: Taken.
Time to root, nose-to-ground.
Time to spoon with mom, a perfect sleep.
Soft awakenings. Up next: Adventure.

I promise you Libby:
You WILL adventure-walk again.
We pass down Pershing 4/21/22.
Alert, in a new soft caste.
Your nose animates.
Dabs at the air. Vibrant and keen.

You know this place!
It is a treasure-box of times:
Crazy wet snow. Slippery spots.
Big dark dogs on leashes.
Bygone scents woven in soil.
A thousand tales caught on the wind.
Shimmers. Awaken and energize you.
You WILL walk again, I promise.

And I kiss your hopeful face.
I massage loose folds at the base of your neck.
You WILL walk again. Cast-free.
Soft dirt beneath your pads.
We hold that promise, you and I, for the rest
of our drive home. We hug that promise hard.

How could I know you'd stiffen and fall, later that night?
How could I know we'd leave you at VSS, "survivable," only
to learn moments after home that you're in cardiac arrest?
Even then, you return. The defibrillator shocks you back.
A beat endures beneath jagged breath.
You are here…

For the Promise Of The Walk.

I am so fucked up and filled with hot rage.
Promise denied. Death 2 days later. Walk unfulfilled.
Death in the cast.
The horror I dread comes to be. Libby, I am so sorry.
Libby I LOVE YOU. Libby, I am walking you.
Holding you. Kissing you. LIBBY, MOMMY IS HERE.

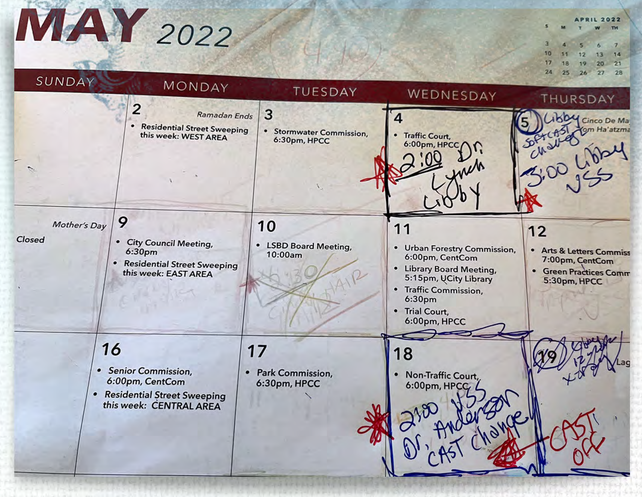
Mon 4/25/22 6:04am: I awaken every 2-3 hours, from sleep in a recliner (I can't get in bed, where I napped with Libby) – to find Booker and Mabel gathered around Libby's leash. 5:00am.
Cara: You're all grieving loss together.

Tue 4/26/22: Dr. Lynch picks you up today. So you're no longer in our home. Our beautiful perfect beagle. Our Libby. I've never been so pissed in my life. From the moment you got sick last August – you never had a chance. Not for a moment. Yet I still bargain. The mind wanders. If I'd done this, withheld that, tweaked the other. Followed my gut here. The mind bargains. You are still alive and there is a chance. It drifts and recreates moments. God fucking damn it. I am so angry. How dare you be taken at 11 years old. Our strong, tank-to-the-ground rebound Libby? You? How dare you be dead in my basement. Fuck. I'll split in two.

A life cut short in 240 days. From August to April. 240 days. Not years. Barely months. A life with value. Tenacity. Integrated and full. Woven into the bones and flesh of others. A soul. A heart. A life. Gone.

Thu 4/28/22 7:02pm: Elijah, I messaged Sally (Flawdogs) on Facebook:

Hi Sally, This is Brenda Shoss. I wrote "Born in a Puppy Mill" article about Flawdogs and adopted 3 "hooligans" (as you used to call them and crack me up) from you: Mandy (Lhasa), Ethel (Lhasa), and Libby (beagle). The last of my precious Flawdogs, Libby the beagle, died in end-stage renal failure this weekend. I'm broken. She was just 11, young for my senior kids. This marks the end of my Flawdogs family. Mandy died at 15, last year. I hope you are well and happy. We think of you often and how much love and joy filled our home, by way of Flawdogs. Take care, Brenda
2022 >> Sally Ives, Flawdogs
www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100007085508428



Appointments are set for Libby across May 2022.
5/4: Dr. Lynch draws blood to check kidney values.
5/5: Libby visits VSS for her last caste change.
5/18: Dr. Anderson x-rays leg; cast off at 12 wks.

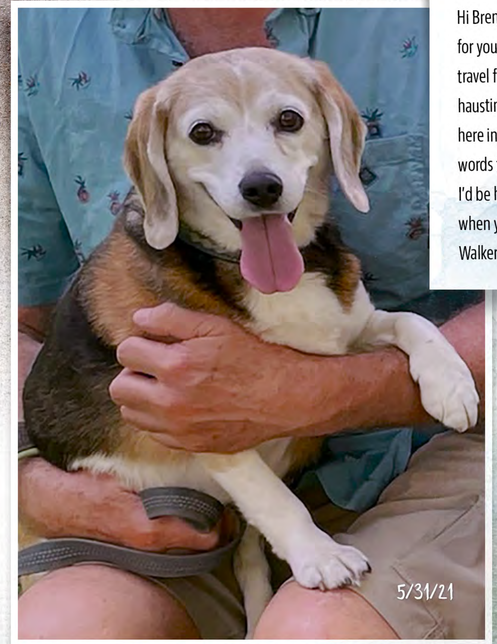
Libby switches to soft cast on same day her heart fails later that night. On our way home from VSS, I sing to her. Kisses. Hugs. We're in sunlight. I can't wait for Libs to feel air and wind on that leg. If she holds on till we get past leg trauma, her kidneys will rally. Like always. I was so wrong. In denial.

MANDY, Lhasa Apso, gone. Unburied. Need pillow marker.
Sat, April 30, 2022 at 9:41 AM
Patty Edson_EverlastingStone <paedson@aol.com>

Libby, Beagle, joins Mandy in death
Hi Patty, I am sending this email because I am unsure if you saw my texts. Liberty Belle (Libby), our beagle, just died. A week ago today… Two of our 4 dogs are now gone and unburied. Mandy (Lhasa Apso) and Libby (beagle).

I'll contact u soon for Libby's casket. I now do what I dread: sift through two kids' entire lives (in pics and writings) to figure out the best words and photos for each of their pillow markers. Layouts and marker size will be identical to the very last one you did for me in 2020, for my cat Isaiah. Just different words/images. Can you let me know you saw this, when you get a sec? Thanks, Brenda

LIBBY gone. Need casket and pillow marker
From: Patty Edson, Sat 4/30/22 at 2:10pm
Hi Brenda. I got your text last week. I'm so sorry for your loss of Libby, I know how hard this is. I travel for work, and was unable to respond. It's exhausting and I white-knuckle parts of my drive here in Florida. It was then hard to find comforting words for you between meetings and phone calls. I'd be happy to help however I can. Let me know when you're ready to order the casket. I will give Walker a heads up on the marker. Sincerely, Patty



8) aug 5 days
9) sep 30 days
10) oct 31 days
11) nov 30 days
12) dec 31 days
1) jan 31 days
2) feb 28 days
3) mar 31 days
4) apr 23 days

The Wonder Of Geese

Mon 5/2/22 2:11pm: See the geese? If Libby were on this walk with me right now – she'd dislocate my arm outta its socket. Gotta get to geese, gotta get to geese!
Elijah: Aww. Wheres that at? Libby was the leader.
Brenda: Shaw Park in Clayton. Libby assumed all furry, feathered and winged critters were just within her reach. At the very least, she could corner them up trees, if only her dang mom walked faster and gave her a little more leash length! Libby did NOT like to swim though. Etelah is fearless. She breaststrokes through puddles (if deep enough), streams, rivers. Mandy, same way. I called them Lhasa Otters. The hounds, not so much…

[To Christy] PS: I do mindless chunks of coding to refocus my mind away from the anger, withdrawal, and pain I feel for Liberty Belle. But I can only work in chunks. I don't know how we carry on, with death after death.

Time carves distance from pain, but it's that very distance I fear. Losing Libby's immediacy – her pant, her looks, her smell, her kisses, her cuddles – is ongoing death. At some point, each lost kid is reduced to curated memories, trapped in photos. Their absence outlives their presence.

Mon 5/2/22: Hi Olivia, Our beagle, Liberty Belle (Libby) died last Sat. Congestive heart failure from end-stage kidney disease. As much as I worried about Etelah after Mandy's death, this may be worse. Mandy was a mother figure for Etelah. **Libby was Etelah's inseparable, bound-from-birth soulmate and best friend. You never saw one without the other.** Etelah has been disoriented, as if she does not know where or how to be without Libby. She's sleeping in weird spots and migrates to our kitchen, as if looking at back door for Libby.

Libby was definitely her ringleader and mentor. We constantly laughed over how Etelah was a beagle-wannabe. Now, Etelah is sad and bewildered. Gratefully, she is eating. Our 4-dog pack has dwindled to just two dogs in 1.5 years. Both surviving dogs are confused. Please call with estimated time you'll be done with Etelah. I don't want her there till Grady gets off work, so I'll pick her up when you're done. You can call and later text me if that time changes a half hour or more… Thanks very much, Brenda

Nick Lewis nick@machq.com
Tue 5/24/22 11:04am Re: Libby:
I'm so sorry to hear that. I missed the original message (we're now using Gmail for MacHQ mail, which is great, but the switchover was painful, as it always is). She was a fighter! I'm so sorry for your loss. If you don't mind I'd love to have a photo of Libby to keep. Hang in there, Nick

Brenda: I have thousands. I've sent 3 favs, beginning with Libby (and Ethel, the Lhasa rescued from same puppy mill as Libby) the day we adopted Libby and Ethel… to her final days in her leg caste. The last pic is literally the same day she had first cardiac failure later that night. She was so happy and bright. We'd just been to orthopedic vet and learned her caste could come off in 2 weeks. Libby was beautiful at all ages. I am touched you wanted a pic of our Liberty Belle. She was definitely the ringleader in our Pack of 4 (now only 2): Mandy, Libby, Etelah, Mabel. Etelah was especially bonded with Libby. At night, she leaves my bed and wanders into kitchen, to wait at back door for Libby. It's heartbreaking. Brenda

5/27/22 AFTER LIBBY: There is a new book out called Grief Is Love. It's premise is that grief is lifelong because love is lifelong. No one, despite what they might tell themselves, "gets over it." Functionality is separate from grief. Yes, time carves distance to accommodate function. But grief is everlasting. In fact, as happened with NewTown slaughter, the TX school murders led me right back to Ethel. Her bowl was on the kitchen counter, in anticipation of breakfast as soon as I returned from class. Instead, I came home to the cold, lifeless body of a 1.5-yr old baby. When I hear about parents who kissed their babies just hours before massacre, their screams when no reunion came… I am right there, on my knees. And now, with Libby too.

Dear Liberty Belle

Dear Liberty Belle
My Libby – Every moment of every day since you became sick last August — I never believed for a second that you'd leave us. You had much to do, a hero among dogs. A Sentinel, my protector. Etelah's Big Sister, best friend and mentor. The Eyes (and Nose!) of our home. The fulcrum in our Adventures Walks. Everything flows from you; Strong, Proud, Fiercely loving Child. Everything Flows From You.

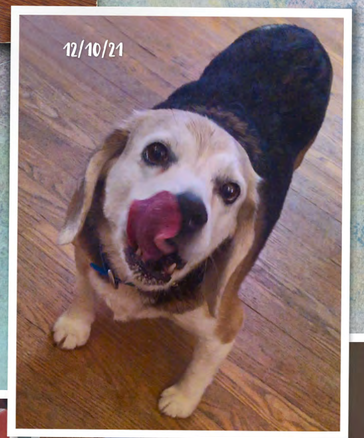
So I never believed for a second you'd leave us, I bargained. I pleaded. Prayed. I talked to your kidneys, I talked to your soul. I memorized every strand. Silky ears, brown pools, the silly folds along your back. I massaged, and talked… But never wept, because of course you'd heal.

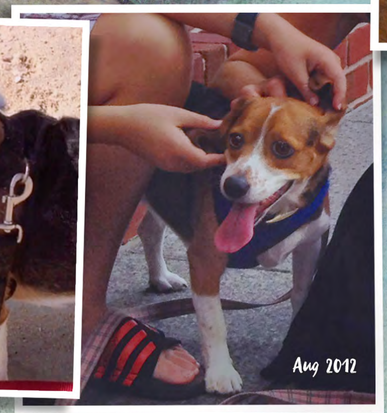
You gave every moment, summoning a strength no human could ever posess. But 171 days we got 171 days, Start to end. NOT your FAULT. You wanted to live. Your commitment to stay? Unlike any ever seen. "Libby is not like other dogs!" you never were… From Ethel's killing to your own end: 100% united, part of us. I can barely breathe without you here.

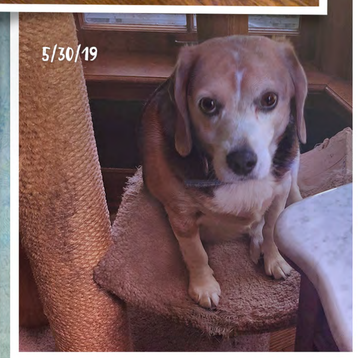
I promised you Adventure, More walks. We were so close, you smelled it. I felt it. Just weeks away from a healed leg… I'm so sorry precious perfect baby. As I grew to know you more, discover miracles in you — you were already leaving.

Libby – you gave us all the love, joy and laughter of a beautiful being. I want to walk you again. Hold you again. I love you. Mommy's here, Grady loves you. Elijah loves you, Etelah loves you. Dr. Lynch loves you. We carry your heart now too – For all the days that we breathe, Mommy is here, I LOVE YOU Libby LuLu Wu Wu

goodbye







Liberty Belle, is an enterprising girl. The Professor,
brown-eyed and rapt. Entrepreneurial.
Flying Ace on tactical ops: Dumpster Dives,
Litter Box Invasions. Gate Escapes.
A Projectile Tongue drags cat meals off counters...
Beagle Deep Concentration Face (BDCF) to joker's grin.

CEO of Dogs. The Beagle Mind Meld traps Mandy
in unblinking stare-downs. Ethel is your soulmate,
two teeny gumdrops infinitely bound. Etelah is fangirl,
a beagle wannabe. She still listens for your heavy pant
by the backdoor.

Libby LuLu, Wibby Wiv, Libayah, Libs Schwibbs, Libster...
The fulcrum who wields us. All events pivot from you.

A treasure-box of times: Crazy wet snow.
Squirrels, birds, big dark dogs. Drop and roll.
Your nose finds secrets in soil.
And a thousand tales caught on the wind.

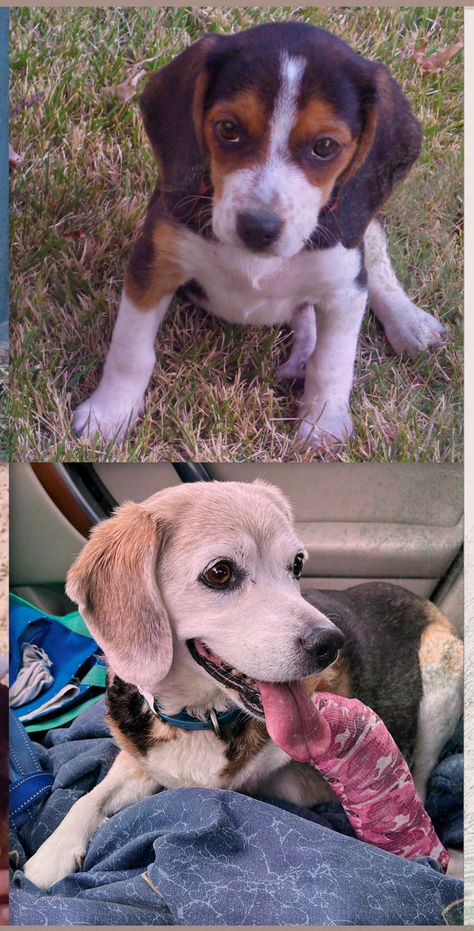
You will walk again. I kiss your hopeful face.
Massage velvet ears and baggy folds down your neck.
We hold that promise. We hug that promise hard.

Libby, you complete Ethel's heart. When she is killed,
you are indelibly cast as guardian. The Sentinel who
mends our broken core. On watch, till your last breath.

The strongest Ms. Person ever known. Tank-to-ground teflon.
(Libby's not like other dogs.) With a big curly smile that glitters like the sun.
240 days. For The Promise Of A Walk. The next adventure.

Our Sentinel. Our Eyes (and Nose). Friend and Child.
The other half of Ethel's heart. Now you both beat inside us.
Liberty Belle, we love you.

LIBBY • 8-1-2010 to 4-23-2022



Libby is an enterprising girl. The Professor.
Entrepreneurial. Flying Ace on tactical ops:
Dumpster Dives, Litter Box Invasions.
A Projectile Tongue drags cat meals off counters...

CEO of Dogs. Mandy is stuck in your Beagle Mind Meld.
Ethel is soul sister. Etelah is fangirl, a beagle wannabe.

Libby LuLu, Wibby Wu, Libayah, Libster, Libs... Our
Fulcrum: All events pivot from you. Your nose finds
secrets in soil. A thousand tales caught on the wind.

You are a strong Ms. Person, tank-to-ground teflon.
With a big curly smile that glitters like the sun.
240 Days. For The Promise Of A Walk.
Our Sentinel. Our Eyes (and Nose). Friend and Child.
The other half of Ethel's heart. Now you both
beat inside us. Liberty Belle, we love you.