



Sayonara

Today's story is not about a long-ago event, but from last weekend. And - I'm sorry - but we have sad, although not unexpected news.

Friday morning I was downstairs in the workshop doing some work on the current print, when I was interrupted by the intercom from the entrance to the house. It was the boy from two doors down, and it was very unusual to hear his voice at this time of day, as he is usually at work. It could mean only one thing - he was here with news about Boots-chan.

When I got to the door, I found that my surmise had been correct, but not exactly what I had expected. He was carrying a blanket, with Boots wrapped inside, protected from the cold air. When I opened the flap of the blanket to see her, I discovered that over the two months since she last visited, she had changed a great deal.

All the extra weight she had gained over the past year was gone, and she was now thinner than I could imagine. Her fur was patchy and her eyes were now both cloudy white. She couldn't see me, but responded with a slight lift of her head when I spoke quietly to her and softly stroked under her chin.

The boy explained that for about two weeks now, she had been unable to stand up, that they had been feeding her by placing food into her mouth, and on a couple of occasions had taken her to the vet for a transfusion. The family had discussed the situation and decided that it was not fair to Boots-chan to let this be prolonged. He had come to see me today, to let me see her and understand. They would be taking her to the vet on Sunday morning, when all the family was available. I of course asked if I could join them then, and he agreed.

As we stood in my entranceway talking, little Haru-chan, who had followed him down the road, slipped between our legs and went into my house to explore. This of course, is exactly how my relationship with Boots had begun ten years ago, with the neighbour's cat being at first curious, and finding the place congenial, pretty much moving in - staying for most of each day, only going home for food. A few minutes later the boy took Boots back home, and I returned to my workbench, leaving Haru-chan to explore upstairs. When I came upstairs later, she had disappeared.

I can't say that I was 'looking forward' to Sunday of course, but these events were no shock, as Boots had let us know quite a long time in advance what to expect.

But she had one more surprise for us.

Early Saturday morning, under the warm sunshine on the blanket in her cat basket, she decided to let go, and passed away, with the most peaceful end that one could wish for. Her seventeen year journey through this world was over.

That afternoon, the family gave me another chance to see her and say good-bye before taking her to be cremated.

There isn't much else to add. I have so many memories of our time together that I think I could write a 'Boots story' once a month for many years to come. She was a wonderful companion here, never complaining or crying, always friendly to the visitors and guests, and bringing pleasure and smiles to all who met her.

It has been more than a year since she became too old to 'wander the neighbourhood' and be spending most of her time here at my place as she did for so many years, but I am sure that her 'own' family enjoyed her company in my stead.

Good-bye Boots-chan! You were always quite the 'lady', and I will miss you very much!

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