

Our very precious companion, Nemo

March 5th, 2015

It is just after two in the morning on a weekday. Mary just came in and woke me, telling me that Nemo fell ill a short while, maybe less than an hour ago. He took his last breath in her arms as it should have been. He wasn't quite seven. Any mistyping at the moment is because of my many tears which are hard to control. We will miss his undying love, his dedication to protect us and his much anticipated requests for treats and for us to love him back.

Last night as usual, he lay in front of Mary's chair while we watched TV, belly up for her to rub him with her feet. He was in total bliss as he helped to lower her blood pressure. He was so trusting with us.

About seven years ago, Mary was looking for a companion dog at the SPCA. This was not too long after my stroke and the loss of another of our two companions, Pepper and Stormy. I was home, not able to venture out so she went by herself on a mission. She found this lovely but lonely dog of about eighteen months that cried out to take him home with her. We talked so she went back and adopted him.

I wasn't sure at first if he was going to work out. I'll admit he was aggressive making me somewhat afraid of him. He was this way, especially toward any visitors, friends or strangers such as the electric meter reader, the mailmen, the UPS drivers and people just coming to the front door and knocking,..Well, you get the idea. At first, we got him a large, 4 x 6 cage for when people came to visit. Then, Mary tried obedience school. He performed flawlessly, learning rapidly but he wasn't ever right in the head around strangers. We suspected abuse when he was a puppy. What to do? We pondered and decided we needed him as much as he needed us so he would remain. It was up to us to adapt.

Soon he settled in with us, providing so much love, we knew he would have this as his home until whenever he left this earth. We put a big sign on our front door warning people of a LARGE dog in residence who did NOT like strangers, friend or foe. It took a while, and several shredded signs for him to learn and us to learn how to live with it. He didn't know from stairs. Mary had to teach him as I would coax from the first floor.

It's funny. He was not ever mean with either of us, our cat, the chickens, our neighbor's dog, Reilly or their dog visitors.

He knew somehow instinctively that my right side was useless so Nemo sat at my left side with me in my wheelchair, looking back over his shoulder with those big brown eyes asking only to be loved as he tried to show his love. He didn't need words.

He watched while sitting beside me when Mary left to go to her shop each day and knew the right time when she should be getting home. He either watched from out on the porch when it was nice or a front window and he knew the sound of our car, oft times hearing it before Mary turned onto our street down the block, coming home. He was always so excited to see her and greet her.

He was loyal to a fault, loving as all get out and we feel he would have defended us with all he had, if either or both of us had ever been threatened.

I'm writing this piece as the deepest tribute to our dear, dear friend and companion because that's pretty much all I can do these days, is write.

How I will miss him so...sitting by my wheelchair for some loving, following me and sitting near when I'm at my computer, fixing a meal, sharing lunch, him with a small treat, me with my whatever at the time, doing what I can do with fixing dinner, folding clothes, the morning dishes, sometimes cleaning and dusting what I can reach. Whatever, my boy was right there watching over me and keeping me company, keeping us company, either when we were all together or Mary needed his help while doing her many, many chores inside and out. He didn't care for the noise of the sweeper or the

lawn tractor. He always found me, asking to be protected, which of course I did to his loving satisfaction.

If he was here now at 2 a.m., he would lay close to Mary's bed some nights or mine on other nights, always his choice, his comfort. As I wrote above, I'm so sad he is gone. If there is a doggy heaven, he's there now with all of our other critters. That's a comforting thought so that's what I choose to believe. I loved him so, so much and will miss him horribly.

Thank you, Captain Nemo, for all you gave to us. I hope we gave you as much in return and had a good life with us. I cannot say goodbye as it is just too hard to do so. I will think of you and picture you in the many places here in the house, on the porches, in the back yard, out with Mary near the garden, near the bee hives, along the fence visiting with Reilly, over near the chicken coop, rolling blissfully in whatever you scented, snatching a cooked egg or a piece of stale bread Mary gave to her girls, playing in the kiddie pool that was "your pond" and on and on. You loved the snow, rooting through it with your nose, snorting then doing it again. You hated when the snow packed between your paws, always wanting our help to "take care of it". You loved the rain but even more, whenever you got wet, you stood still for us to dry you with a big, fluffy towel. Sometimes, I think that was your purpose and secret desire, going out into the rain or diving into your pond. You hated when Mary was determined to give you a bath. You fought and dragged your feet but finally realized her resolve and stood with her in the shower, enduring the worst, secretly enjoying it. But after, was your favorite part, being loved and dried by both of us with large, fluffy towels before racing outside to roll in the dirt. We called that dust bathing, the final process you just had to do.

I'm sure I'll remember many other fond and not so fond moments but now I will let you rest. I love you, our dear, dear friend. Mary loves you and misses you. Nemo, you will always have a big place in our hearts, as all our other critters that came before you but you were so very special at a time when we needed a special friend. We will miss

you, fiercely. Rest well, my friend. I know you won't mind if we put a few of your favorite things in your final resting place – Chickie chews, dog oatmeal cookies, a hint of cheese, your very best favorite thing, some cat food, a bone or two, and yes, a big, fluffy towel. Please share, even if you don't want to. Swim, dig, root, burrow and play to your heart's content. Take good care, you wonderful, special friend. I hope somehow to see you one day but for now you live in our hearts.