



Dear Sweet Mr. Murpfy

Our dear, sweet Mr. Murpfy,

I wanted to express to you what you meant to us, in part as an immense thank you for being part of our Pfamily, and as a way of somehow processing this overwhelming grief that we are struggling to get through since last Wednesday night, when you wagged your last tail & peacefully went to sleep.

I realize you can't read - sadly very few dogs can - and since we had to say goodbye to you last week, this message is in large part for me - to remind myself, and really all of us I guess, to be thankful for beings that give us nothing but 100% love through their time on earth. And to be more like you, as much as imperfect, dumb humans can try to be anyway.

The night you left us, your mom & I came home from the emergency vet feeling like a truck had run over us out of the blue, and when the truck had passed, decided to slam it into reverse, and came back for seconds (in this analogy, *not* the FedEx truck, cuz you loved Mark the driver for delivering huge treats with every single package). We sat there, overwhelmed with grief, numb and crying. Once I could see clearly again, I started scrolling through the thousands of photos on each of our phones (those blocky things you wondered why we looked at too often) where you were being your awesome self: Hiking with us, camping, running and laying on the beach,

wading in rivers, goofin' off — just being the chill, peaceful dude you always were (except for chasing bears, fox and possums, you were *all about* that action). Remember when I let you outside one night and we both saw the possum at the base of that tree? You bolted down the steps so fast after it that you lost a nail - like, your toe nail came *completely* OUT because of the sheer velocity of speed you had, blasting towards this weird, hissing creature you came face-to-face with. What a night!

We often wondered if you had a sense of how lucky you were - you may not remember this, but you were saved by an amazing woman here in Asheville *the very day* they had scheduled you to be 'put down' - trust me, I hate kill shelters too. The folks at the shelter named you Job, since you had so many afflictions to deal with at your tender age, due to being totally neglected (some humans really suck buddy, they just do), to the degree that you nearly passed away a night or two, when your pain was unbearable. But, you survived and made it, champ. Your foster mom said you were one of the worst cases of neglect/abuse she had ever seen in her 12 years of saving dogs like you. Your foster mom named you George - she knew you deserved to move past the biblical like suffering you endured. For the record, George is a fine name, some kings have been named George, but you were destined to be our Murpfy. Which leads to this humorous tidbit of having direct eye contact with you even before we were meeting you face-to-face. We were driving up from Hickory to meet you and Karen, your awesome, amazing foster mom. As we were getting closer to the address in Asheville we were headed to, there we were at a stoplight. I looked over about the same time you turned your head from your sitting posture in the car - you remember? I said to Nana, "Hey, isn't that the dog we're about to meet?!" Sure was. Pretty sure you gave me a head nod that said 'what's up?' as the light turned green. We loved ya from the instant we saw ya, big man. Once we said yes to making you part of our family, we took you outside to get into our car, you immediately found a dead bird in the yard and started throwing it into the air with your mouth, playing with it like it was your new favorite toy. We knew we had a fun one on our hands.

Sorry to embarrass you like some fathers do to their sons, but dude, you had horrible mange at the time and we weren't even sure if all your fur would come back after we took you home. But you became even more beautiful and handsome - a big, gentle giant of a dog with reddish brown fur and eyes that were golden, light yellow brown and shined so brightly. You were really somethin' else - complete with your adorable white socks and white chest, and just to dot

the 'i', your tail even had a small dab of white at the tip. This is no exaggeration, but dude, you got complimented *everywhere* we would go with you! "What a handsome boy!" we heard over and over and over - my head would've swelled, but you were so humble. It always felt so odd to say "Thanks!" in return, I half expected every time I said that, you'd be looking up at me rolling your eyes. We were also constantly asked what sort of dog you were - "What breed is he? You could do a DNA test!" We were content not knowing, partly because you were the best breed we knew - our breed, by way of adoption.

During your nine awesome years, you lived in three different homes. One was a small rental while we built our first house here in Asheville, where we adopted you. At each home, regardless of size or style, you were totally and utterly content, yet another lesson for us. Man, I bet you miss your favorite chair, the one you rolled yourself completely out of while playing and broke through the glass window you were next to in our sunroom - remember that classic?! Sorry, I keep embarrassing you, my bad. When you had rolled out of the chair and found yourself standing in the ivy, now completely outside looking at me, wondering, "Well, now what? I'm outside I guess!" - once we knew you & I both didn't cut ourselves, we all laughed our asses off. It's true, dogs laugh and have a sense of humor, look it up. Not you Murpfy, you already knew this, plus, need I remind you, dogs can't read.

Murpfy, nine years with you was just the best - it never feels long enough though, right? Much like going for a walk (insert head tilt here) - you always wanted to go a bit longer (unless it was blazing hot), and that's sure how we feel now - "Can't we please just get to hang with this cool doggo a bit longer?" You knew you were cool, right? I know for sure you knew you that you were loved.

Your mom & dad have heard from SO many good friends and neighbors after they heard the sad news - it's a bittersweet reminder that you made quick friends with good people, they felt better just by being near you. But I feel like you picked up on that, like I'm not telling you anything you didn't already sense. "I know they love me, c'mon man!" Sorry Murpf, this entire thing is just hard to know what to say or not to say, it's a process we're still processing. We have flowers upon flowers sent to us that show just what effect you had on people's lives - really not sure I'd get as many flowers - I know, you'd remind me, "Dude, life is not a contest, just be content, dummy!" Yes, I will try my boy, I will do my best to try, I promise you.

As Brendan Leonard (@Semi-Rad) shared in one of my favorite essays about having to say goodbye to awesome dogs like you, Murpf Gurf, it said: "Dogs leave a hole in your heart, but they make your heart bigger too". You certainly did both of those things, bud.

I - or rather, *we*, will all miss you terribly, and although at present it feels like my chest may implode from grief, I cannot wait to reach the days when I think of your beautiful life, and it makes me smile so very big, because I was privileged and honored to call you "my boy" - the absolute best of all the 'good boys'.

I love you now and forever, my dear, sweet Mr. Murpfy

Murpfy Pfahlert 2014 - 2023