



Lucy Slaughter

April 4, 2008 - August 25, 2021

Lucy (aka “Lu” or “LuLu”) Slaughter, our beloved Siberian Husky/German Shepherd, was born 4/4/2008 and passed on 8/6/2021.

Lucy was preceded in death by her beagle “brother” Snoopy. In addition to her human parents, Dawn & Mark Slaughter, she had many other favorite people including Rebecca Slaughter and her dog, Bentley; Monica, Dave and Andrew Slaughter as beloved dog sitters, puppy Cooper and his parents Allie & Don, and so many lovely neighbors, friends and family. She was well loved by all. Lucy enjoyed being outdoors, watching/chasing rabbits and squirrels, and going for walks. She wagged her tail in circles when hearing the word “walk” and often crossed her paws when resting contentedly. She was a calming presence, rarely barking, but made “talking” sounds or pawing gestures to get our attention.

Lucy’s least favorite things included thunderstorms, fireworks, hot air balloons, and smoke alarms.

What I remember most about Lucy was the way she made eye contact, fixing her eyes on mine, as if we communicated through our eyes. (Which I believe we did.) ♡

We miss you, sweet Lucy!

~Dawn Slaughter

A LESSON ABOUT LOSS & WAVES FOR DOG LOVERS...

The waves on Captiva Island in the early August heat were gentle and

calming as they lapped against the shell covered shoreline. I waded out in the water frequently to cool off a bit, even though the water itself was warm, like bathwater. Alternating between sitting under a small beach umbrella to avoid the sun's heat and floating in the balmy saltwater, my mind was on vacation for 4 days, 1200 miles away from the pain of a difficult reality.

Earlier that week had been a flurry of attempts at canine caregiving, ultimately giving way to the inevitable final goodbye. With her recently brushed out layers of fluffy German Shepherd and Siberian Husky fur hiding her skinny frame, Lucy was no longer enticed by chicken or special treats. I talked to her a lot that week, reminding her that she was a very special dog, a soul companion; first to our daughter, and continuing with us as empty nesters, a "love-at-first-sight" forever bonded kind of dog. And I told her she would be okay. Now I'm finding ways to tell myself I'll be okay...

For thirteen years Lucy was faithfully and consistently by our side like a friendly, happy shadow; a peaceful presence, patient with children, loving to guests, and always up for walks. She often rested with her front paws crossed and wagged her tail in circles when excited. She stood tall and moved gracefully, appearing fearless, but resorted to anxiety during thunderstorms, fireworks, and hot air balloon sightings. Recently traumatized by our kitchen smoke alarm, the sounds of our oven were added to her list of anxiety causes. Even as she began to slow down with aging, her eyes met mine with consistent attentiveness, tail wagging, radiating her sweet disposition. But, as with all life, one is never ready for endings, and as our journey together unfolded into closure and peace...we were faced with the heartbreak of reality.

This is why I needed the blue water, the sandy beaches and the gift of time. In addition to being the destination of our anniversary vacation, Captiva became a place to begin reconciling this goodbye with the hellos of life without Lucy. There would be emptiness, absence and so many reminders of the one I fed, walked, cared for - all the big and small things related to her dog-ness. Grieving is often referred to as waves, and I knew these waves had the

potential to tip me over and roll me out to sea.

So I studied the waves first hand. The small ones were easy – barely noticeable. They were a great place to begin. Floating on the calm water was soothing and the ripples in the water reflected sunlight and comfort. I could rest here in Captiva where the waters were calm, but there would be larger waves to navigate once I returned home. Just as the oceans are always changing, life doesn't come with a very long pause button.

I was reminded that just a few months earlier at a different beach there had been many days in a row of double red flags signaling dangerous waves and rip tide currents. When there are double red flags no one is allowed in the water. This is a time to stay on the beach and wait, watch and rest. Conserve your energy. There is great wisdom in recognizing danger and waiting for the waters to settle down.

One red flag is also a danger warning, but it's okay to go in knee deep. It's about sticking your toes in the water, feeling the temperature, testing the strength of the waves. It's normal to sink down a bit at first, and the power of the waves crashing into the shore can throw off one's balance. There is value in figuring out how to establish good equilibrium at a knee deep level.

Sometimes the one red flag level lasts awhile. Be patient.

As with traffic lights, the yellow flag indicates caution. Going farther out into the water and navigating the waves requires knowing one's limits, navigating the waves from a place of reasonable comfort, where the waves are viewed as challenges. Perspective is important. I can enjoy riding the waves in the space before the waves break, but where my feet are still able to touch the bottom. I'm not completely over my head, but sometimes the larger waves come, and I ride with them. If I see a giant wave coming, I can respond accordingly by moving to shallower water, preparing for it as best I can.

Waves can be unpredictable, especially when you turn your back to them. Sometimes a wave dies out and sometimes it gains size along the way and comes out of nowhere. We need to be on guard in the caution zone and use

good judgement, develop skills, and stay grounded as much as possible. Hard times, losing someone dear to us, whether it's a beloved animal or human, can drain our energy and resources, knock us off our feet for a bit, like waves. Knowing this can make us more aware and better able to navigate our life and move forward, face the waves, recover from the wipe outs, and go to the safety of the shore when necessary. It's helpful to view it all as a healing process, recognizing each incoming wave as the next challenge.

Maybe the waves won't completely remove the pain, but I know that I will be closer to being okay if I can learn to meet the waves with wisdom, clarity, strength, bravery, dignity, curiosity, and a security that comes from the experience, the process.

Rest in Peace, Dear Sweet Lucy...I know you are okay. I will be okay too, after I ride a few more waves...

~Dawn Elizabeth Slaughter 08/15/2021

Tribute Wall



“ 3 files added to the album *Lucy Slaughter*



Loyal and True - August 24, 2021 at 11:19 AM