

# Keeva

Category: Letting Go

written by Dagmar Friedman | December 1, 2018

My dog was lean and strong from swimming, running and walking long distances. Her fur—thick, soft and golden—glistened in the sun. She slept half on and half off her bed near mine. At 6:30 each morning, her wet nose nuzzled me awake. Keeva loved snow and cold weather. She pounced on disappearing snowballs. She chased after balls on the icy beach or plunged after them into the frigid sea. The ocean, a lake or swimming pool all beckoned to her.

Keeva died at age eleven from a hemangioma-sarcoma. My husband had died five years before, and now my dog. Keeva's cancer appeared on her left hind paw. She had surgery twice, followed by antibiotics, a bandage and a bootie. For a while the tumors seemed quiet, but they returned with increasing frequency. When no medical intervention seemed to work, I let Keeva care for her paw herself. She licked it continuously. To my amazement, and to that of her veterinarians, the lesion in her paw dried and scabbed. But eventually the tumor returned.

Keeva was a loving companion for more than eleven years. We got her when my husband developed a brain tumor and wanted a dog. "She won't care if I am loony. Eventually my friends will stop visiting," he told me. He was right. Many friends were afraid or uncomfortable around his dementia. Keeva didn't care. For over six years, she was his companion. She slept on his lap when she was a puppy, walked with him on the beach or just sat by his side.

After his death, Keeva became my dog. She followed me wherever or whenever she could. We took long walks, went swimming in the ocean and in lakes and pools. She went with me to visit friends and stayed in the car while I bought groceries. I wonder if she knew what a comfort she was after my husband of fifty-seven years died.

Now there is no dog to awaken me at 6:30 in the morning. Yet I feel joy remembering the nudge of her wet nose, her paw reaching for my hand, my arms wrapping around her.

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