



## ***You Can't Make This Stuff Up***

Julie Lusk

We adored Sophie and Lucy as much as they adored each other. Sophie, a sweet blonde cockapoo, was 2 years older than Lucy, a sassy schnoodle. They were always playing, sleeping, and eating together. They showered us with lots of love and laughs. We joked they were like Yin and Yang, like in the picture.

Even though Lucy was younger, bigger, and stronger than Sophie, Lucy always let Sophie win at tug-of-war with their toys. She was also faster but always waited for Sophie at the edge of the yard before going out to sniff out fun and mischief. They enjoyed living together for thirteen amazing years.

Sophie overcame cancer and bravely got insulin shots twice daily for diabetes during the last two years of her life. She took it in stride. Sophie kept slowing down until she eventually left her body.

Our hearts broke into a million pieces. It's agonizing to say "bye for now" to a beloved pet. Lucy still waited, looking back for her best friend when she went outside, even though she was no longer with us.

My husband Dave painted an oil painting of Sophie to honor her life and to help ease his grief. We told lots of stories about her, laughing and crying simultaneously. It was a tender time for sure.

Two years later, the painting was finally finished and Dave put it on the fireplace mantle to dry.

Lo and behold, Lucy went straight to Sophie's painting and stood staring at it for the longest time. We were stunned. We have never seen her do anything like this, let alone pay any attention to the mantle. She stayed there long enough for me to find my camera and snap this picture.



After a month or so, Lucy went to be groomed without her sister. Sadly, we told Jim, our groomer, that Sophie wouldn't be getting any more haircuts. We shared a poignant moment of remembrance together. Jim loved her too.

Our way of trying to soften our grief is to fill the raw emptiness with another pet. We asked Jim if he knew of any older dogs or puppies who needed a loving, fun-loving home. It is rare that anyone else is in the groomer's lobby. This time however, there was. Jim introduced me to Robin who's schnoodle had just given birth to five puppies two weeks prior- exactly the type and size we were hoping for. It felt like a divine, magical moment. We picked out our Breezy and got her when she was old enough to leave her birth home. We were delighted! We believe she was heaven sent.



By this time, Lucy was already 14 and slowing down. Arthritis was getting to her. Lucy and Breezy became close friends. It was touching to see Lucy popping back to life and being happy and playful once again with a puppy to keep her on her toes and her tail wagging.

Our hearts broke once again when Lucy died just one day after her “Sweet Sixteenth” birthday. We placed a photo of Lucy on the mantle like we had for Sophie. We were astonished to see Breezy go up to her picture to stand and stare at her old friend for quite a while. We couldn’t believe our eyes to see her do the same thing Lucy did for Sophie. Dave made an oil painting of the photograph that is now hanging beside Sophie’s painting.



This year, Dave painted a picture of Merlin and Piper, Breezy’s parents, after we learned that her dad had died. Here’s the photo of when Robin picked it up.



Notice the “rainbow bridge” on the wall between them. You just can’t make this stuff up!!