

# MY JOURNAL VALENTINO



Margaret



(9th March, 2009)

Today, the weather was good. Everyone may think it's a good time for a picnic. However, it must be a bad day for my young sister, Anna. Her beloved dog, Valentino, died on 9th March, 2008.

I remembered Valentino became weak after we had held a birthday party for him on his birthday (14th February) last year. That's why we named him 'Valentino'. February wasn't a good month for him because he became weaker and weaker. We guessed maybe he was too old, so Anna and I brought him to the clinic.

When we walked into the waiting room, Anna was lovingly petting Valentino. I soon realized that Valentino's old age had dimmed the bright fire of his eyes and there was dullness there then. Valentino had had a normal appetite until this week, he was not eating at all. The doctor examined Valentino patiently. And then she found out : a tubular mass in his abdomen.

The doctor had made everything clear to me. I immediately looked at Anna and back at the dog she had probably had all her life. I was going to have to tell her that her beloved companion had a tumor. Even if the tumor were surgically removed, Valentino would survive less than two months and might need weekly chemotherapy to last that long.

It seemed Anna was about to learn one of life's toughest lessons; that death is something that happens to every living thing. And it seemed that I was the one to guide her through her first tough lesson. Anna knew something was wrong, so I talked to her and explained everything to her. While I was trying to explain everything, Anna jerked away from me. Her eyes were filled with tears. I turned



back to Valentino while I was listening to the doctor's alternatives. Giving him an injection and putting him to sleep must be the worst alternative.

Anna listened carefully and said she didn't want Valentino to suffer.

The doctor called our parents. Soon they were both in the clinic. The doctor went over everything again with my parents while Anna was petting Valentino. My mother spoke to Anna, her voice broke a few times. Soon Anna turned to the doctor with dry eyes and said she had decided to put Valentino to sleep. I could see how much it was costing Anna. I asked if she wanted to take Valentino home overnight to say good-bye, but she said no. She just wanted to be alone with him for a few minutes.

My parents and I left Anna and went to sign out the barbiturate the doctor would use to ease Valentino into a painless sleep. I really could not control my tears, or the grief I felt welling up inside for Anna.

We waited outside the exam room. In a few minutes, Anna came out and said she was ready. I asked if she wanted to stay with Valentino, she immediately said 'yes'. The doctor administered the injection, Valentino drifted off to sleep and his head cradled in Anna's hand. Valentino looked quiet and at rest. It must be very hard for Anna to bear all the suffering. I said to her: 'Anna, you have just given Valentino the finest gift, to relieve one's pain so that a loved one might rest.'

Anna nodded her head. I held out my arms and gave her a big and warm hug.