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Wednesday, December 4, 2002

My darling Muffin,

I was born on a Wednesday, which, according to legend, makes me a "child of woe." Today, is proof positive of that saying; it is the last day of your wonderful life.

Let me begin by saying that your seventeen years on this earth, which I have been most privileged to share, have brought only joy and love into my life. How fortunate I was that day I walked into Doktor Pet Center in Ohio for the purpose of buying a cat sweater. I remember it so well. Melissa found you first, a three-month-old ball of fur, already endowed with the most endearing of personalities. I never dreamed I would so completely lose my heart to a little animal as I have to you.

It was great fun to play with you, your favorite toy being one of Jim's old socks with a knot tied at the end. We laughed to see you hang on so tightly that we lifted you right off the floor. I don't know, maybe that's what made your little teeth so crooked.

You joined a family of cats and had great fun playing with them right from the first. Especially Tigger, the orange tabby we rescued from

abandonment. To our delight, you would charge at him, lifting his haunches off the floor and making him into a wheelbarrow, all of which he endured with good grace.

You used to look so pensive when I'd leave for work in the morning, watching me go down the drive. It would tug at my heart to see those beautiful big brown eyes follow me out into the street. And then, oh happy day! We got the little country store and you came to work with me every day. And didn't you capture every heart that walked in the door- You'd do your cute little thing, flipping over on your back to have your tummy tickled.

And traveling - well, you were the best traveler. From Ohio all the way to Florida and back, several times, and never a bit of a problem. Your behavior was impeccable. All you needed it seemed, was our love, which you had in great abundance.

You tolerated Janie's big dogs even when Sam bit you and displaced your eye. What a fright that was! But the vet pushed it back in its socket and told us how lucky we were it hadn't been just a hair closer.

You learned that "sitting up" got you almost anything, and you're the only dog I ever knew who sat up to have her back rubbed. You did

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that for sixteen years, and even after that, you tried, but I wouldn't let you for fear you'd hurt your back.

You never bit anyone but Nick, and he deserved it, not that it was much of a bite.

This last year has been the hardest for you, and for me to watch. I knew your eyesight was failing, and your hearing as well. You didn't hear me when I'd say the magic words, "Ice cream." You developed a cough, which they told me was a collapsing trachea. Then the fatty tumors, a sign of advancing age, began to appear more and more frequently. Still, you enjoyed life and being at my side.

The last few months there were the horrid seizures. Five in all. Then they stopped for two months. In the last two days, there were three in 24 hours. Last night's was the worst. The coughing lasted for an hour and a half and the gurgling frightened me. It finally stopped and you slept. I was so afraid you'd have another.

I'd always hoped, unrealistically I know, that we'd be together forever, but that was not possible. And I swore I'd never end your life. I wanted it to be on your own terms, but I was afraid to subject you to another episode like the last. You weren't drinking water and I knew in

my heart, that ultimately, I would have to do the kind thing I held you most tenderly while they administered your last shot. I hope you understand. And I hope that it's true about the Rainbow Bridge I want it to be true.

Although I have had many dear animals in my lifetime, you are the most beloved, the best friend, greatest comforter, and as dear to me as my other children, for truly, you were my child. I shall treasure every memory of you all the days of my life. There will never be another Muffin. Sleep well, my love.

Little Miss Muppet XII - August 18, 1985 - December 4, 2002

THE RAINBOW BRIDGE

There is a bridge connecting Heaven and Earth. It is called the Rainbow Bridge because of its many colors. Just this side of the Rainbow Bridge there is a land of meadows, hills and valleys with lush green grass.

When a beloved pet dies, the pet goes to this place. There is always food and water and warm spring weather. The old and frail animals are young again. Those who are maimed are made whole again. They play all day with each other.

There is only one thing missing: they are not with their special person who loved them on earth. So, each day they run and play until the day comes when one suddenly stops playing and looks up! The nose twitches! The ears are up! The eyes are staring! And this one suddenly runs from the group. You have been seen, and when you and your special friend meet again, you take him or her in your arms and embrace. Then, you cross the Rainbow Bridge together, never again to be separated.