

Thank You

— by Jean Cote —

I knew.

I knew every time you showed up. Every single day. No matter what.

I knew it on the rainy walks neither of us wanted. We went anyway.

I knew it in the treats. The extra minutes on the floor. The trips to the pet store.

I knew it every time you forgave me. The messes. The chewed things. The muddy floors.

You always came back with the same open hands. The same voice that meant home.

I was never a perfect pet. But you loved me like I was. And that made me feel like I was.

I saw what you did when things got hard.

The long drives. The waiting rooms. The questions. The refusing to give up. The tears.

I felt your hand, even at the end. I heard your voice. I knew you were there.

So please hear this:

You did enough. You were enough. There is nothing you should have done differently.

Stop asking what ifs.

You went all the way. Further than most ever go.

And I knew it. I always knew it.

Grieve fully. It's just love with nowhere left to go.

Then, slowly, live again. Let the sun in. Laugh. Eat good food. Take a walk, even without me.

I am not waiting in darkness. I am somewhere wide and warm and bright.

I knew you loved me. I always knew.

And when the time comes, many, many years from now,

I will find you the way I always found you.

I will know you anywhere.

I will come running.

And we will have all the time in the world.

Thank you.

