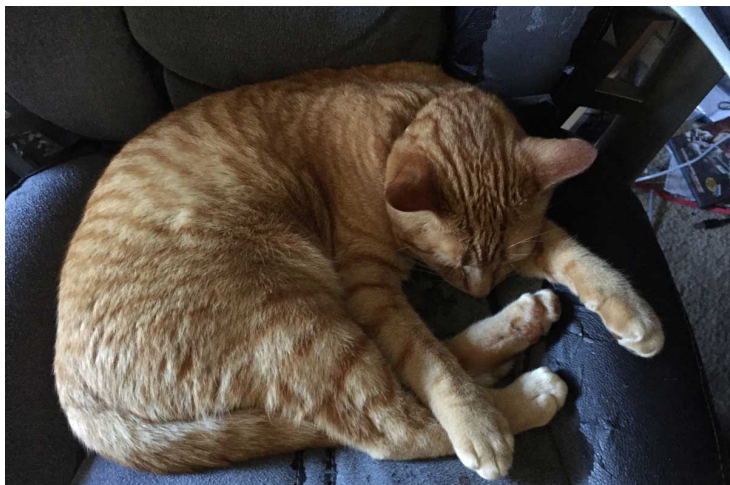


I won't be fighting the cat for my chair anymore...



It's really windy and wet outside. Nasty little storm from nowhere. Zig, our cat, seems to enjoy being outside at times like this. Sometime in the next hour or so, I expect to see him come in through the dog door, very wet, pretty cold, and not bothered by it in the slightest. That's just the type of cat he is. Except that isn't going to happen anymore.

This morning, heading up Kings, very slowly heading up Kings, I got a text message on my Garmin from Becky (my daughter, Kevin's sister, Sales Manager of Chain Reaction in Redwood City).

You need to come home NOW!

Followed shortly thereafter by a missed phone call. Kevin and I quickly stopped our ascent, waving Karen and JR on ahead and telling them not to wait for us while we figured out what was going on. Obviously not good news. All sorts of things go through your head at a time like that. One of which is that it might not be all that bad, because Becky will sometimes be just a bit of a drama queen.

You're left wondering if the doctor had called and said there was a recurrence of my wife's cancer, or something had happened to my mom's husband, who was supposed to have some sort of minor operation the day before (but ended up not having it).

It was our cat, Zig. Becky had already been stressed because Zig, who normally comes in late at night and sleeps with Becky, had gotten fussy enough to have Becky let him back outside at 10:30pm. I went to bed not knowing he hadn't come back in. I'm sure Becky was outside calling him, later that night, as she always does. And eventually, he'd come home and Becky would let him into her room. It's been a pretty silly routine that's gone on for over a year. Zig asserting a slowly-increasing sense of independence, while Becky has felt a slowly-increasing sense of fear that something could happen to him.

Someone found Zig at the side of the road, and called the number on his tag, letting Becky know he'd been killed by a car. Kevin and I sped back home, switched to regular shoes and helped finish the hole Becky had prepared in our side yard to bury Zig. The hard part was seeing him laid out on a small blanket in the kitchen, looking like he was asleep, and expecting him to just simply wake up and be fine. You irrationally wonder what's wrong with him. A dead dog looks, well, dead. You can tell they're gone. A dead cat looks like he's resting. Looks like he's going to start purring when you scratch behind his ear.

The other hard part was covering him with that last bit of dirt. The very last time, the very last thing I'd see of Zig. It was, fittingly now that I think about it, the end of his tail.

I never thought I'd care much for a cat, but Zig was much different than I expected. I'll miss him when I come home from the shop and he hasn't stolen my chair from me, the one I'm sitting in now. And I'm going to miss him every night when Becky isn't outside at 10am calling for him.