



The price of love

“The risk of love is loss and the price of loss is grief. But the pain of grief is only a shadow when compared with the pain of never risking love”

— Hilary Stanton Zunin

I am fortunate.

Fortunate in a sense that I am not old enough to experience the death of close ones. That could be the reason why I found topics of grieving over loss somewhat remote. Recently though, I am going through a phase similar to this – the very poor diagnosis of malignant growth around my

BFF-best furry(dog) friend's heart. Imagine my shock upon hearing the news. A lively healthy dog suddenly developed deadly respiratory problems due to the heart tumor.

I am very much aware that at some point of my life, I will experience her demise so I was prepared to have her coming into problems into her senior years. What I did not expect was she could be gone earlier than that. I was devastated. I, who ordinarily wouldn't cry, found myself tearing for the initial few days due to the shock.

As news of her ill-health spread, some well-meaning but inappropriate words were uttered by the people around us. While their words may seem insensitive, I understand that their own fears, needs and desires may have led them to certain expressions. This period of time also led me to do some reflections and research in this topic of grief while at the same time gaining another perspective. I am also very much appreciative of the time I have with my loved ones, specially my father, who is getting on in years.

Anyway, with the intervention of medication help in easing my pet's labored breathing, some normalcy of life returned, which help buy me some time in the processing of my grief. At the time of writing, my dog Molly, is still very much alive. My husband reminded me that the time allocated to her is the time to celebrate life. Indeed, each day with her is now a gift from God. She has always been a gift from God, a birthday gift given to me by God 7 years ago. For someone who isn't very fond of celebrating birthdays, I expressed my desire to the owner for me to pick her up a day after my birthday. However, the owner insisted on having the adoption go through on my birthday so I was forced to pick her up that day. Molly turned out to be a great addition to the family, bringing us unimaginable joy and pride. For the past 7 years, I have been thanking God for bringing her into my life, especially on my birth date.

Will I avoid having another dog in my life again, knowing that I will probably go through the similar experience since it is inevitable that human beings will often outlive the lives of most animals? Still a resounding yes. Each experience in life, interaction with people and the environment, has the potential for me to grow. Ultimately, God is with me every step of the way, sharing my joys as well as my sorrows.

*¹⁷ Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,
¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will be joyful in God my Saviour.*

Habakkuk 3:17-18

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