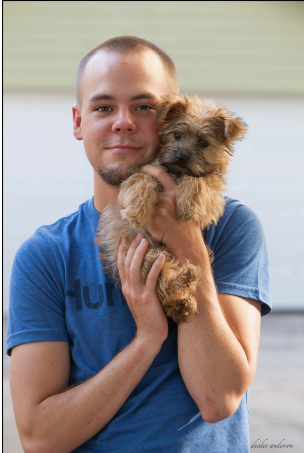


# Last Days of my Fury Little Companion

A journal entry with photos, for remembering my pet with thankfulness



***Augustine Publius Ooperknockety Anderson, Augie, as a puppy***

May 24, 2012, was Augie's birthday—same day (different year) as Micah's birthday; Micah was our youngest son. We called Micah and Augie "birthday buddies." *He's held here by our middle son, Aaron, when he was a Corpsman in the Navy.*

Only last Christmas, all seemed well with our furry little companion. Here's a YouTube clip of [Augie expressing his true feelings regarding my viola playing](#) (if I hold anything against him, this would have to be it!).

Each day for the last fourteen years, Augie brought us laughter and happy distractions (though not always convenient). He has comforted us through many trials: losing my brother, Dave; the COVID lockdown and the riots of the summer-of-love; and losing our son, [Micah Philip](#). There are many examples of his bringing levity to us throughout a day:

- DeeDee and I would communicate to each other through Augie; I'd jokingly tell her what he was "saying", pretending I knew what he was thinking.
- Sometimes I'd howl, just to get him howling.
- He would look at me to get "Mommy" to give him her last bite of food off her plate; I'd tell her in a stern tone, "you give him a bite" (just to get credit from Augie for it).
- He loved being pet *at eye level, as I descended the stairs.*
- We would laugh, hearing him doing his wake-up ritual of banging his head on the carpet and rolling around, before he'd tromp down the stairs to greet us.
- We knew what he was asking for, just by the look in his eyes. Sometimes we'd have to run through a short list, though, to land on his request.
- Words Augie knew: Daddy, Mommy, names of our sons and grandkids; inside, outside, treat, mailman, car, jump, come, upstairs, squirrel, night-night, bath, front door, back door, bat, lay down.... We so much enjoyed watching his reaction as we'd say them.



Here, Augie was telling me it's time to go inside, as I was sitting in my wicker chair—last time giving me this look/command.



We knew he was slowing down the last couple of months: couldn't always jump up *on the couch*, was wanting more attention, napping more, wanting us to come to bed by 9:00, not always at the door to greet us, not always barking at someone walking along the sidewalk with a dog.



Sometimes, we catch signs only after the fact; that's not to say we're necessarily reading signs into the past. With three days having passed since Augie ceased existing, DeeDee and I share these insights with each other, only now realizing the clear indicators of his impending death. (I suppose our understanding of Bible prophecy sometimes is like this.)

### **April 7, Tuesday**

A more direct sign of his dying began last Tuesday night, the night before my son came home from D.C. He lost his dinner on the floor, at the foot of my bed. I thought it was due to my having included a bit of my dinner with his dog food.

### **April 8, Wednesday**

Today, I picked up our eldest son, Fr. Nathanael, from the airport; he flew in from D.C. to be with us and to officiate Mass and Confessions at our parish, Sacred Heart of Jesus. Augie got so excited when my wife, DeeDee, said "Nathanael is coming"; and he went bonkers as Nathanael came through the front door.

### **April 9, Thursday**

Augie rose to the occasion for two family gatherings, with my two sons and the grandkids. The party on Thursday, the week before his passing, he enjoyed his last taste of hamburger and hotdog. That was the first nice day of spring for grilling out.

The last time he chased a squirrel was just after he dug out some ground *under the bench* behind our house.



I thought he was going there to die. But out he tore, barking and chasing that squirrel—another close one (as he always thought)!

After the "narrow miss", he laid *on the grass for Nathanael to pet him*.



### **April 10, Friday**

We would choose Augie again, that day we picked him up in Northern Michigan fourteen years ago, even if we would have seen the suffering we would endure for these last two weeks. Sweet sorrow, indeed.

### **April 11, Saturday**



*Our last family party with Augie. Fr. Nathanael is to my left, with Aaron and three of his kids.*

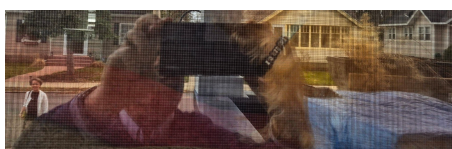


*Isaac, Aaron's eldest son, playing with Augie*

We've parted with our furry little companion by necessity, in love. How much more tragic is the willful parting between people with discord (or for end-of-life or beginning-of-life termination).

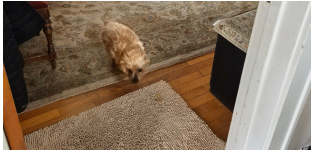
### **April 12 Divine Mercy Sunday**

On Divine Mercy Sunday, *I took this picture of him barking at us from the front window. My wife is in the background. After seeing this picture, she commented that it shows Augie fading from*



our lives. This was the last time he barked at us as we left home.

*Coming home after Mass, he greeted me at the door.*



*Augie and I enjoyed pork rinds together.* DeeDee and Nathanael were having lunch with my (almost) 97 year old Dad. Whether 14 years or 97, life is short. Experiencing the death of a pet can help one prepare for the death of a person, I suppose.



A bit later, Augie sat on my lap, *in my La-Z-Boy rocker.* He licked my ear as though I'd been gone for days. This was a gift! Dogs certainly sense that something is wrong as they die; perhaps they even express their goodbye—sure felt like it.



### **April 13, Monday**

Aaron offered to bring over his dog Pebbles, Augie's would-be girlfriend, for a last farewell. They couldn't make it today; tomorrow was too late. No one can count on tomorrow. With or without warning, we're all terminal. I'm so thankful we had this week before his demise, for taking most of these photos and writing a memoir.



I got a video of his [last time barking at the mailman](#), and this pic of him *shredding a piece of mail*—don't know why he so despised that man!

### **April 14, Tuesday**

Last night he greeted me at the door, as I came home from work. Later that night, after a severe thunderstorm and tornado warning, Augie checked out the fire hydrant near our house for the last time.

*Augie rested on DeeDee, on the couch, after yelping in pain in the middle of the night.* I went to bed. An hour later, I heard his claws clapping on the wood floor,





coming up to be with me; last time he'd make it up the stairs to go night-night. He soon began yelping in pain again, so *I took him out to the wicker rocker in the garage.*



God's timing is perfect and his grace is sufficient. He's into details that we can't discern at the time. E.g., tearing a seat cushion while trying to tie it to a patio chair annoyed me; I placed it on the garage floor for Augie to lie on, thinking he wouldn't have the chance to rest on it. He did, his last two nights. Another example: DeeDee washed and cut him, days before our son came home; so Augie looked nice in these pictures taken the last week of his life. Also, the time set for ending his existence was none too early or late.



### **April 15, Wednesday**

I made him eggs this Wednesday morning; this was the first day he wouldn't eat. For the last several days, his treat was rotisserie chicken. For a couple days before that, he fed on the finest doggy treats. He no longer was eating his dog food.



I sat *at the side of my house*, where Augie loved to go to climb the wood pile, sniffing for chipmunks and marking our fence for the neighbor dogs. I didn't think I'd see him there again; but out he came!



Today, he didn't bother visiting his pit-bull friends (who nearly killed him five years ago.). He walked with me to the side of the house a bit, but didn't make it to his wood pile for sniffing and climbing.

At 8:30 tonight he began yelping, as DeeDee and I sat with him in the living room. I took him outside for him to get sick. He dug his hole under the bench a little deeper and lied down. Again, I suspected he might die there; he wouldn't come out. I left for the convenience store, only gone for several minutes. Pulling up in the driveway, my headlights shone on Augie waiting for me at the fence gate. That's the last time I had the pleasure of finding my furry little companion anticipating my arrival. Later, I played softly on the piano, as he rested in his bed behind me.

This is the last time I had alone with my furry little companion—in the garage, me at my desk and Augie sitting in my mom’s old white wicker rocker. This is the same setting I shared with Micah Philip, the last time we sat alone together.

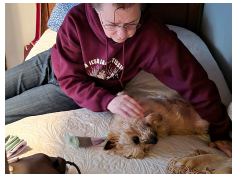


Thunder rolls to light rain. I take him to bed with me one last time, with thoughts and feelings of gratitude; I haven’t deserved this gift from God. How many want a pet but aren’t able?

At 2:00am I brought him to Dee’s room, for one last kiss night-night; she was sleeping too deeply to remember it. How often does God bless us in ways we’re not aware of?

### April 16, Thursday

DeeDee stayed home from work Thursday, so I could catch a couple hours of sleep after being with Augie all night. She spent time alone with him. I prayed the Rosary this morning, as Augie laid on the bunk-bed, being pet by “Mommy.”

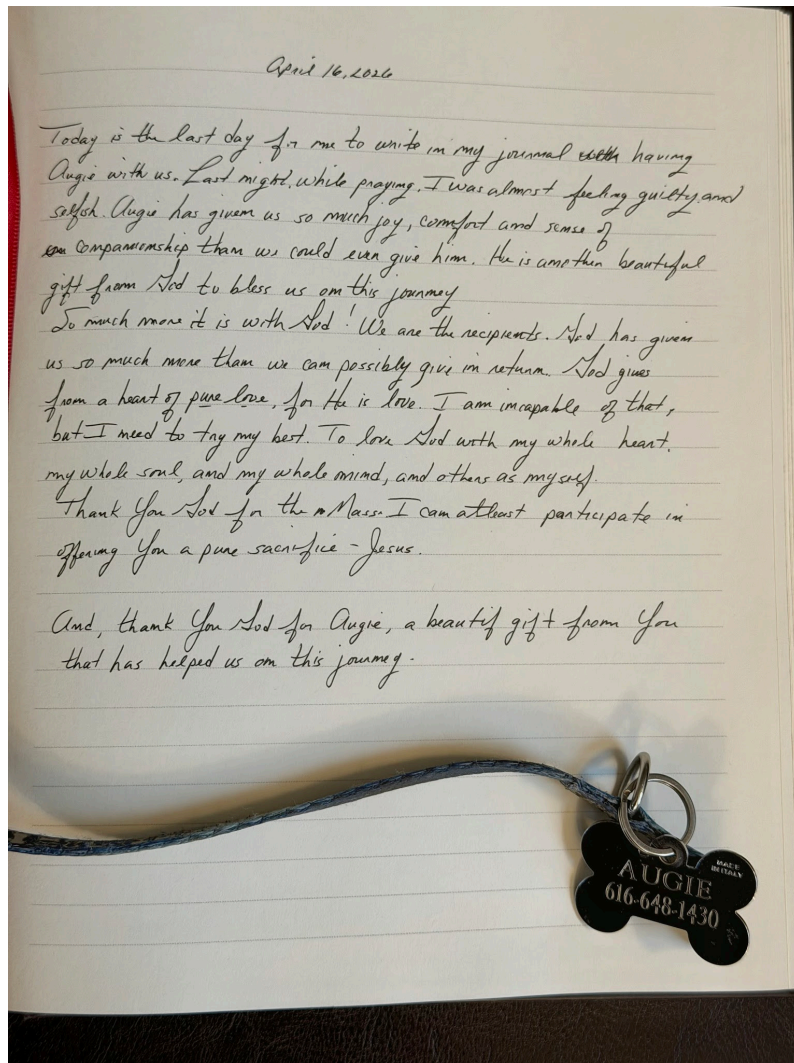


6:00am Augie and I had four hours of sleep.

I opened Dee’s door at 6:30am, without a word—pretending Augie opened it (as I often did). He didn’t ask her to lift him to her bed, as he normally would, but climbed directly *into his*.



10:30am Dee and I cried together, as she read her journal entry for that morning.



I put a touch of water on his lips. He enjoyed his last drink.

12:30pm We took our last selfie in front of the hutch, with the Prodigal Son (and dog) picture behind us, just before leaving our house with Augie.

Augie played the part of that Prodigal Son's dog when our Prodigal Son, Micah, came home to us on May 25 of 2022.



We took our selfie with Micah in front of this hutch just before he left our house for the last time. He was killed in a car accident about three weeks later.



Catholic art has always taken pet dogs seriously. “Subdue the earth” never was taken to mean: treat animals and nature without regard. God placed us as stewards over nature. While we are in God’s image, and dogs are not, we are to care for the many gifts He’s given us—Augie most certainly included.



We’ve experienced an echo of Eden—man and beast at peace, helping and enjoying one another.

1:30 Augie kissed “Mommy” on the way to the animal shelter; he wanted to get out with me as I got out of the car. I signed the forms and came out to get him; my wife and I watched as he walked in the grass and smelled the smells—for the last time. I kissed his cheek as I handed him over to the vet, doing our last loving act for him.

After arriving home, I felt Augie’s absence—a pit in my stomach. Why am I not seeing or hearing him in his usual places, throughout the day and night? My eyes and ears expect to see and hear what they have, for the last fourteen years.



10:40pm Sitting in Eucharistic Adoration, thanking Jesus for Augie. God's love is not only deep, wishing no one to perish, but so wide—loving all his creatures—most certainly including Augustine Publius Operknockity Anderson! He'll soon restore the world we've corrupted by our rebellion. Come soon Lord Jesus!



*Noble Augie!*

## **April 17, Friday**

I sat alone in my wicker rocker in the garage, looking at his treat jar with the kleenex I used to wipe my tears.

I'm not asking Augie to pray for me, as I might to a believer who passed away. Nor am I praying for his purging for entrance to Heaven; I don't expect to see him after the resurrection. I didn't opt to receive his remains, to give a proper burial. I don't concern myself with how he would have wanted me to go on living my life.

To Augie, we were a pack; dogs are social and affectionate. To us, he was part of our family, our furry little companion whom we enjoyed, cared for (as good stewards to God), and loved. I very much miss him. He wasn't our son, though; he wasn't a person—and there is a big difference. Losing Augie is not at all the same as losing our son, Micah.

Suffering, for us, has purpose—not so for animals. Euthenasia robs people of meaning and benefits in dying. For animals, it simply eliminates useless suffering.

## **April 20, Monday**

This is the first day of coming home from work without Augie's greeting. Dee worked alone in her home office all day—no happy distractions. We have no regrets, knowing that we cared well for the furry little companion whom God blessed us with.

The cliché is true: life goes on. Here I sit in my classroom, between classes, typing up this blog post. Hopefully, it will help someone through their suffering, from the loss of their pet or from a more tragic loss. At least it will help my wife and I to remember cherished details of the last ten days with our furry little companion. I just finished playing on the piano "It's a Wonderful World"—indeed it is! Sin and Satan have corrupted it, yet we have much still to praise God for. Soon will come the restoration, Christ's Kingdom. Again I pray, come soon Lord Jesus!

Waxing philosophical, I recorded this podcast, juxtaposing the Christian understanding of death, dying, and suffering, with that of a popular New Age thinker. [link to podcast](#). Episode: "Farewell to Augie". How much richer is the Christian understanding of suffering, life, and death, than atheistic mysticism.

Quoting from *The Light Shines on in the Darkness*, Robert Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D., states that these are the steps to suffering well:

foundations enable suffering to work miracles—opening the way to humility..to compassion...to gentleness and acceptance...to courage...to transcendent meaning in life...to an awareness of grace, providence, and the power of the Holy Spirit...and to the anticipation of perfect truth, love, goodness, and home where once there was cosmic emptiness,, loneliness, and alienation.

[Link](#) to more pictures of Augie

Our 40th Wedding Anniversary, just last August, at a cottage we rented. We didn't know a cougar roamed the area! Dee napped with him there, in the afternoon.



Camping with Augie, last September. We didn't know it would be our last trip with him.







Augi, at the end of a log—and of a wonderful long life!

Thank you, Jesus, for the fourteen years with my furry little companion, Augie! We'll thankfully remember this precious gift.

Lyrics come to mind: *God's mercies are new every morning; great is His faithfulness; He's so good to me.*