

## Wonderful Time



1. You would watch us, playing catch. Softball. Through the backyard fence. We'd stop and scratch its ears through the chain link.
2. "Do you want it?" they asked over the fence. We don't have time for a dog anymore.
3. They handed you over. Crate, treats, and one toy. Just one. And never asked or said a word about it again.
4. They lived there two more years. We moved first.
5. The next month, they got a new puppy.
6. We learned that you were untrained. No sit, no stay, no heeling.
7. You bit once. When our daughter tried to take your toy away.
8. He wanted to take you to the shelter. Dangerous. Too risky.
9. I Googled so much. *Give me a chance. Us a chance.*
10. Lunch meat saved your life. You would do anything for treats. Learned every command in three days and never snapped again.
11. You were terrified of grates. Stairs. Garbage Cans. Lamp posts.
12. They say aggression is really acting out fear.
13. The neighbor's wife left him. Told everybody he was aggressive. We never saw their puppy again.
14. I was at work. He carried you in a sling made from one of your favorite fleece throw blankets and drove like Hell to the emergency vet.
15. I got that call. It was too late. Alive, but unseeing eyes. Brain damage. Should we? The vet wants to know.
16. We can wait until I get home from work, but they don't think you'll recognize us.
17. Here, but not here anymore. Time to choose what we want to remember.
18. Is choosing the when and how we go a blessing or is ignorance bliss?
19. The photo is on our table. The frame says: *Thank you for everything. I had a wonderful time.*
20. I can't even look at it most days.
21. Here I sit, with a wad of toilet paper. Can't cry at funerals, but devastated over a five year old picture frame.
22. Your brothers still look for you. So do we.
23. You loved booze. I learned to keep my wine glass out of reach and warn our friends.
24. The day that frozen beer keg exploded on the patio was the best day of your entire life.
25. We held each other and cried for days. You taught him that there is no weakness in crying. He needed that.
26. Others have been lived because you taught us patience.
27. Thank you for everything. We had a wonderful time.