



Teddy Bear

In Memory of Teddy Bear 1977 - 1992

On December 1st, Wolf Haven lost one of its most loved and most adopted wolves. It is always difficult when a member of our wolf family dies, but, in this case, it was particularly poignant since for so many years of his life Teddy Bear knew only terrible neglect and abuse.

Teddy was born into captivity in 1977 south of Sacramento, California, where he was displayed in a roadside zoo. The facility was closed in 1983 because of the deplorable conditions. Wolf Haven was called in to rescue him, and Stephen Kuntz, president of Wolf Haven, drove down and back in 23 hours, bringing with him a starving, debilitated wolf.

Shortly after, in 1984, Sung arrived and the two were placed together. The first six months Teddy was with us, he gained 50 pounds and the light began to come back into his eyes. Sung and Teddy shared one of the strongest bonds between paired wolves at Wolf Haven. Her youthful ways revitalized him, and for many years, Teddy lived a calm, peaceful, happy and very loved life.

Certain Native Americans call the wolf "teacher," and Teddy taught all who

came into contact with him the strength and power of forgiveness for, despite the horrific conditions of his early years, Teddy became one of our most gentle, loving animals, studying all his visitors with wise, solemn eyes.

In recent years, Teddy's eyesight grew weaker and finally the cataracts covering his eyes left him blind.

He adapted well to his loss of sight, apparently compensating with his keen sense of smell. However, in the last few months, Teddy developed a chronic sinus infection that did not improve with medications, and we knew it was time to let him go. Stephen, who had rescued him so many years before, gave Teddy a shot that quietly put him to sleep; our veterinarian then euthanised him.

Teddy's body was left with Sung for ten minutes or so with the hope that she would somehow understand what was happening. It was enough time for Sung to go up to Teddy's body, sniff and lick him goodbye.

Behind our sanctuary is a small cemetery. We brought Teddy's body there and had a short memorial service for him. Indian legend says that if a coyote eats one hair of a wolf that has died, that wolf will be reborn in the spring. We have two coyotes, Junior and Defiance, and a snippet of hair from Teddy's tail went into a hot dog which went into Junior.

So next April or May, high up in the timber or out on the tundra, a pup will be born, a sturdy, strong wolf with solemn, wise eyes, living in freedom all the days of his life, with joy in his heart, and perhaps a tiny memory of Wolf Haven in his soul.