

## **Celebrity Otter: Nyac**

***By Dina Del Buchia***

*Rest in peace, Nyac! i'm happy you could finish your life in a nice place, safe from the stupidity of some humans ...*

– “clairenunavut,” comment posted May 2011 on “nyac the otter tribute”

YouTube video uploaded October 2, 2008

Before social media, you were a nobody.

Snuffed and rafted with your family in open water as though there was no other way,

as though in twenty years you would not be

a poster child for tragedy and tourism.

Your light fur, golden, a shade women pay

top dollar to achieve in layers of ammonia

and petroleum,

hours in a stylist's chair.

From slicked black, snout not even visible,

to picture-perfect, made for advertisements, plush toys, mugs. Fur-print tote bags instead of torn from your flesh.

You had the right story, a TV movie starring

Jennifer Love Hewitt, that you overcame with take-a-look-at-me-now appeal. You were a girl fished

from a well, a kidnapping survivor, a wartorn orphan,

a slim pup reborn in oil.

## **Celebrity Otter Milo**

***By Dina Del Buchia***

*chemotherapy for a rodent ...???? bizarre*

– “Terdherder,” comment posted January 12, 2012, on “Celebrity sea otter dies at Vancouver Aquarium after six-month battle with lymphoma,” National Post

He makes lymphoma  
seem like a lollipop flavour  
under aquarium supervision,  
breaks from treatment to brush  
his loose coat, massage through  
to his skin, swims in blue pools  
back from the crowd,  
like his aqua-coloured home,  
everything he knows  
looks like a late-sixties bathroom  
someone means to renovate. Cells divide as fast  
as YouTube views accumulate.  
Same technology used  
at Children’s Hospital,  
that other place of  
adorable sadness.  
He lost Nyac three years ago.  
He was her boy toy, eleven years younger,

good as any Beverly Hills  
housewife. A pool boy.  
Unlike humans, he plays well  
into twilight years, into times  
when bones and arteries  
are more like accessories,  
not utilitarian. Twelve is probably seventy in other years.  
An old man at the bowling alley told me most males pass  
within nine and a half months of losing a spouse.  
He didn't get a single strike  
that afternoon, forearms worn  
from his own wife's  
early-morning instruction.  
Weed, mow, break  
down that door I wanted you  
to build three years ago.  
Like an ailing politician,  
we weep for Milo, hold vigils  
on the Internet. I advise  
we make small shrines in our homes:  
tasteful glitter pens, foam core,  
fake candles, ceramic replicas  
looted from the gift shop.  
The newscaster disagrees, advocates

for time spent outdoors, not thinking about the otter.

Turns out no one listens to me.

Still we all come back

to his and hers, paws together, rescued.

On glowing screens we watch, listen

to visitors coo and awe

over nature's basest connection.

I advise substitution:

a Robert Palmer soundtrack,

or Roxette. Do with that what you will.

Each view gives the world

cute chemotherapy.