**[The cat!](http://pastoral-musings.blogspot.com/2013/04/the-cat.html)**

A while ago our cat got sick, some sort of respiratory thing that caused him to breath rather raspingly and just lie under a shady bush like he was about to die. Finding him in this condition I rang the Vet and was told that they had an opening almost immediately if I could bring him in there and then! Now Prince is normally not the most docile of Puss's! He has a reputation around the neighborhood for beating up every other cat, and in fact causing the demise of our lovely immediate neighbors cat! He doesn't like being lifted up and has exceedingly sharp claws which he is happy to use to good effect to make his intentions known. So - how do I transport him to the vet? I found a large cardboard box, put some newspaper on the bottom of  it, positioned it in the car on the passenger seat next to me, and gently picked up Prince and deposited him in it, quickly closing the car door and closing all the flaps on the box to keep him in. For some reason my children refused flatly to hold the lid closed  for me while I drove - in fact they refused to travel in the car with Prince! Past experience had almost traumatized them for life! However I had no option so off I started, steering wheel in one hand and the other trying valiantly to hold the flaps on the box closed - if there is ever a next time, I will put it in the boot! Well this listless, sick moggy, instantly gained one if not more, of its nine lives and decided to use it to the full! Head, legs, claws, teeth emerged from the box, and as fast as I pushed the head back in, a paw would pop out and flail around for something to rip to shreds - needless to say trying to drive and contain him, rapidly became impossible, and with blood drippy from hand and arm I surrendered the battle that I was never going to win and let him out! Have you ever been in  a car with  a demented cat determined that there has to be  a way out if he can hit any and all of the glass windows hard enough. This rather large ball of fury sailed around and around inside, bouncing off windshield (rather hard to see where you are going with a lunatic fluffball in in the way), side windows, rear window, seats, ceiling, the only part he avoided was the floor - oh, and the box!  To add to the mayhem He emitted a high pitched whining noise the whole time! I also learn't of another reaction that cats have to stress - it's called shedding! He shedded fur everywhere- not just a bit of fluff - a full snowstorm of the stuff that caused everything to itch and my sinuses to immediately revolt! Just when I thought I would have to stop and abandon the vehicle, he decided that the best spot was to jam himself on top of the dashboard hard against the windscreen next to me and moan at every other vehicle on the road. This also optimized the amount of fur he could shed in the direction of my face, neck and hands- I mention hands because it stuck nicely to the congealing blood so that I now appeared to be an escapee from the planet of the Apes. We continued to the Vet in this manner! Arriving at the Vet, I still had to get him inside. The box was now out of the question, and seeing that I was already covered in fur and blood I figured the only thing to do was to pick him up, cuddle him to me and pray that I survived long enough to get inside. Staying true to his completely contrary nature, he allowed me to resign myself to my fate as I picked him up, then snuggled into my shoulder like the most cuddly cat and lay there like this was his normal behavior. It worked a treat as the receptionist questioned me on what I had been doing to this sweet animal to get it so upset - the poor thing..........! Half an hour visit with the Vet - gets me to hold the cat while he sticks a thermometer up it's rectum, "Just take a good handful of skin on its neck", he says. Fortunately the table was stainless steel and Prince couldn't get any traction, because it would have been curtains for both of us if he could - as it was I couldn't believe how much a cat can contort it's body in order to get a claw or two in human flesh. The Vet gave him  a jab of something - liquid gold judging by the bill, and we lowered Prince into a proper transport cage, then both applied plasters to our various wounds. The surgery only had a light dusting of fur as most it was in the car and after taking out a second mortgage to pay  for the entire exercise - (for that amount, you'd think that there would at least be a robot to hold the cat), we headed home. For the next three days I had to squirt some paste down Prince's throat - funny, but yet again the family left this job to me - well I knew how to hold him by a handful of neck skin - pity we didn't have a stainless steel bench like the Vet -amazing how much purchase a cat can get off lino! Furthermore, the end I was dealing with, had teeth! Prince is now fully recovered; The car, after copious vacuuming over many months is almost free of fur, and my hands mostly healed! The second mortgage to pay the Vet should just about be cleared by the time I retire, and Prince has returned to terrorizing the neighborhood! Anyone want a cat?

This article was written in 2013. Prince passed away some years back. Random cats now mooch nonchalantly across my back yard, or clean themselves in my car-port. They take liberties with my lawn – don’t they have their own litter boxes? Funny how when boundaries aren’t enforced, they are quickly ignored! R.I.P. Prince.