

# To Have a Cat with Chylothorax

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of the idiopathic variety means living with her, the quiet-purrer, cuddling her and planning her death. It means spending thousands to discover the slow (getting faster) leak of chyle filling her pleural space with hostile milk that compresses the lobes of her lungs, scarring them and making them crackly, like a leaf so dry it begs to be crushed underfoot—not what you want in a lung. It means contemplating the six-hour drive to Davis, the best vet school in the country, where they perform thoracic duct ligation laparoscopically—she wouldn't be laid wide open, fragile. It means holding this calico tabby with the tiger tail long after I would have gotten up to pee, watching her breaths and hoping I don't count to fifty before a minute passes. Yes, I'll open that drawer for you, Kirby. I see you, still curious and pulling out each obstacle to make room to explore.