

Five Months At Home

When COVID-19 began, I was in San Francisco with my roommates. The stay at home order seemed to come so suddenly; our families told us domestic travel may be shut down and encouraged us to fly home. So, I packed up a single suitcase and flew home to Colorado the next day, not really expecting that I would be home for the next five months. It was a relief to see my family, but it was strange spending so much time at home after being in college in another state for the better part of two years. What happened the week before I went back to San Francisco seemed to be a sign that it was good that I had been able to be home with my family for a while. In Colorado, I live with my parents, younger brother, and yellow lab Sundance. We got Sundance when I was 8 years old, and he has been my best friend for the past 12 years. He has had epilepsy and arthritis from a young age, so I always knew there was a chance he would find his way to doggie heaven while I was away at college. Because of this, every time I went back to SF after visiting home, I'd have a small talk with Sundance, telling him to hang on until the next time I saw him. I had this talk with him a few days before I planned to start my road trip back to San Francisco. I told him I was leaving, and that I knew he could hang on until I got back. The next day, Sundance couldn't get up. We brought him to the vet, who told us he had bone cancer in his elbow, causing him too much pain to want to put any weight on it. Sundance was 12 and a half at this point, so an amputation would do more harm than good. Since he couldn't do anything on his own - go to the bathroom, get up to eat or drink, or get up to greet us, we decided it was his time to go to doggie heaven. My mom said he knew I was leaving, and he wanted his "whole pack" to be there when he had

to move on. It's always too soon to say goodbye to your best friend, but I think that this was true. After all, he did wait until I was back home again to say goodbye. Quarantine has been hard, but it gave me time with my family and my dog that I will forever cherish.