

Heart Line

by Kim Conklin

One sunny morning, a big-bellied ball of yellow fur surveyed a yard full of prospective adopters and ran straight to one.

She'd been chosen.

The breeder called the craziest pup in the litter Climbing Ivy. He tried to pull a switch with two other pups, but she knew. The pup was ADD riddled with far too much energy; she understood. She'd loved many dogs, but this one loved her.

The dog loved to run, never happier than free-flying down a laneway, and swim, paddling with so much heart that her chest lifted above the water.

A second's inattention during training, and the pup shot off. The leash snapped. So did the ring finger on her left hand. Her wedding band had to be cut apart.

They were inseparable. The dog waited all day until the computer went off, then her day began. In a dark, miserable life, the dog was her bright spot, the only love she knew.

When she had to leave, she had nowhere to go; at least the dog would be cared for where she was. Sunlight streamed through the kitchen window. The dog stood staring at her, whimpering and confused.

Walking away was her last act of love.

Remembering, her left hand throbbed. It had never healed properly, leaving drawn, tight tendons clinging together. The palm was a mountain range, the life and heart lines unreadable, a lasting imprint of the truest heart she had ever known, still aching.

