

Willy Wonky (bred to be ‘squab’)
From [Palomacy: It’s Pigeon Diplomacy](#)
July 2022

And when I got him home, he started (clumsily) eating! He wasn’t cured, still very wonky, but he had, I believe, regained his will to live. He had been bred to be ‘squab.’

In April, a nice family stopped traffic to rescue a big, white pigeon standing in the middle of their busy street. They fell in love with the young King pigeon who had been bred for meat (squab) & inhumanely “released”. They named him Willy. All was well for a couple of weeks but then something went wrong, Willy started showing neurological problems. His neck twisted, a symptom called “star gazing” or torticollis, he lost motor control & lost the ability to feed himself.



Aiyanna comforts Willy

Willy's people took care of him as best they could & then on 5/17 brought him to Peninsula Humane Society in the hope he could get medical care. Their Exotics Department, managed by Mariela Navarrete, is amazing & we work together to help as many pigeons as possible. Palomacy was full but Mariela's team provided supportive care including gavage feeding for a week. Willy kept losing weight. His torticollis had mostly resolved but he was getting worse rather than better. When Mariela sent this photo of him in an incubator on 5/23, I could see he was losing his fight. I went to pick him up in the hope that home care might save him.



Despite shelter vet care, Willy was getting worse

We know that pigeons are deeply emotional. They become depressed in isolation. We always strive to get birds discharged from hospital care to supportive home care as soon as possible because we so often see improvement. It was truly remarkable to witness Willy's immediate transformation as he was brought outside into fresh air, sunshine & company. He perked up instantly. He looked like a different bird!



Willy's profound improvement started immediately

And when I got him home, he started (clumsily) eating! He wasn't cured, still very wonky, but he had, I believe, regained his will to live.



Willy, who hadn't self-fed for two weeks, immediately started eating!

When a pigeon presents with torticollis, we always suspect paramyxovirus (PMV) & we did with Willy but his illness has been very peculiar. The torticollis is resolved but he's still a little neuro. His crop is inexplicably & persistently big & saggy.



Willy's crop is always big & saggy

His GI system is slow but effective, he's been eating & maintaining his weight. He's been treated for parasites, coccidia & yeast. His blood tests have been normal, no metal toxicity. His fluorscopy didn't provide any clues.



Willy's fluoroscopy shows the big crop but not why

He is still wonky. He naps a lot, is still a little wobbly, sometimes circling. He's recently started fly-launching down but he can't yet fly up successfully. He likes taking wonky baths, hanging out with gentle birds & sitting in the sun spot which he follows all day. He's finished a long course of antibiotics (Trimethoprim Sulfamethoxazole) & is halfway through four weeks of Robenacoxib injections (anti-inflammatory). He's still fostering with me & he likes to be close.

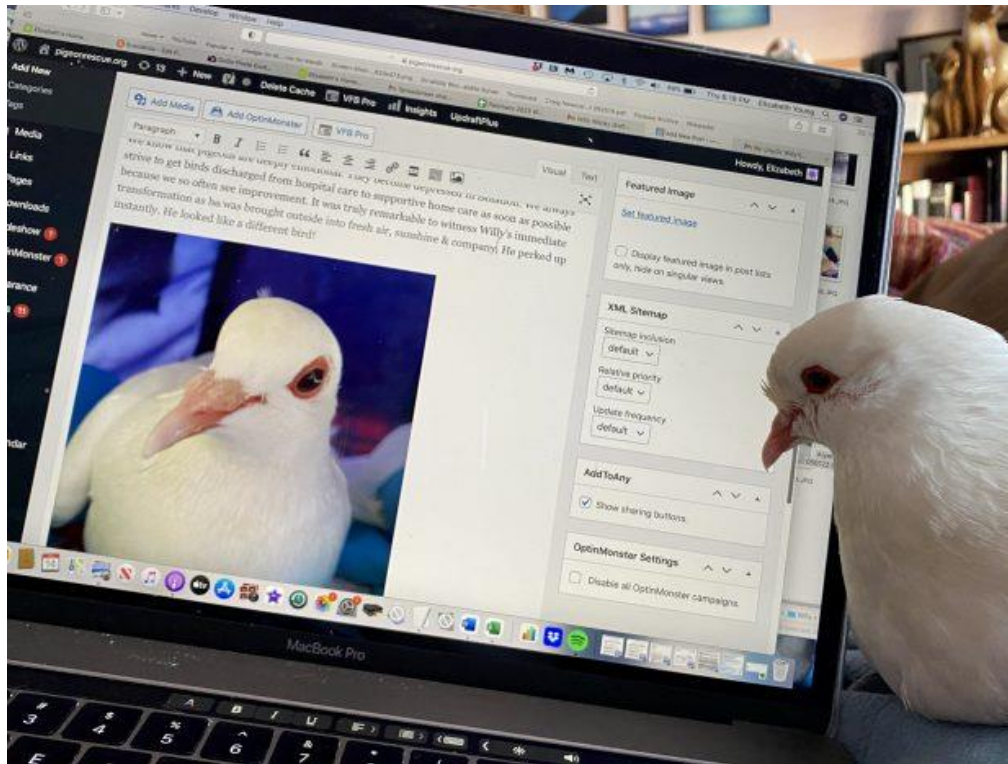


Snuggling napping Willy

He doesn't like hands or being picked up but he likes laps & appreciates having a BFF. His forehead feathers are often floofed in contentment & sometimes he coos at us. He LOVES peanuts. He is making very gradual progress. Only time will tell us how far he'll go.

Willy is wonky, happy & safe & we're committed to making sure that he has his best life, whatever that may be. Willy is precious. Thank you for helping save him. With your generous support, Palomacy [rescues, fosters & rehomes hundreds of pigeons & doves](#) like Willy. Each is an individual. Each has their own story.

Please continue supporting Palomacy with a special bonus match donation this Wednesday 7/20 at 6 AM PST. [GlobalGiving's Bonus Match](#) goes until the bonus fund of \$400,000 runs out, usually within a couple of hours. The bigger the donation, the higher the match rate. Please mark your calendar & set your alarm. We'll send a reminder with the link a few minutes before it starts.



Willy is helping me to thank you for helping him