

# My Poor Little Bird

JJ, my parakeet, is very sick. I had parakeets when I was younger, and I know enough about them to know that we are lucky that he's still alive. His chirping and squawking gradually decreased until I realized the other day that he doesn't vocalize at all anymore. He is very lathargic, and sits puffed up on his perch where he loses his balance every few minutes. His tail is bobbing when he breathes, which is a sign of respiratory distress, and he has some discoloring around his cere (nose), which indicates discharge. The other day, I noticed that he was sitting on the bottom of his cage, which is a sign of imminent death in parakeets. Based upon my research (past experience, the internet, and bothering the heck out of the local pet store), JJ seems to have a respiratory infection – something that is often fatal for small birds.

But he's hung on a few days now from when I first believed his death was imminent when he was at the bottom of his cage. After all, parakeets' instincts are to hide their illnesses. If they show any sign of being sick, wild birds will be cast out by their flock, so if captive birds allow signs of illness to show, it's often too late to save them. I got some birdie antibiotics, and I'm hoping that he is drinking his water where the meds are. He is still eating, and that's a great sign. We put a blanket over the cage, and are trying to keep him warm and calm so he can rest and get well. It's just touch and go at this point, so I'm praying for my little bird. I got so attached to the little guy! I got him right after my beloved dog passed away, and seeing my happy little bird helped me feel at least a tiny bit better. And now I'm watching him suffer; it's hard. I want to move him back upstairs where it's a little warmer and quieter, but I'm afraid of stressing him out too much, which is basically the same reason I don't want to take him to the vet. I guess I'll

wait for him to improve a little more before moving him upstairs; that's the only plan I have right now.

Like I said, he does seem to be improving – the loss of balance on his perch seems to have subsided anyway. But he still does not look well, and he is not vocalizing. He is less than a year old, so maybe his youth is keeping him strong and resilient. Poor JJ! He is just a little parakeet, but he means a lot to me. If you could send out a little prayer for JJ, we'd appreciate it. And pray for my husband while you're at it; he's fighting a nasty cold. Obviously, Hubby's health is a billion times more important than JJ's, but if I wrote a blog post every time Hubby got sick... well, I wouldn't have time for that! Besides, Hubby's illness is not life-threatening. I wonder if Hubby and JJ have the same thing? That's one thing that stinks about this time of year – all the illness! Wish I could transfer some of my super-immune system over to Hubby, who seems to get EVERY single thing that comes our way...