

## **Iditarod 2010**

I didn't expect or plan to run Iditarod again. But...I had such great dogs. But...I had accumulated all the equipment. But...I had a sponsor, a real live sponsor! But... I wanted to try again and make improvements. Like a messed up video game that you just keep plugging quarters into because you know you can beat your score this time, I wanted to go again.

Except crossing the flats after Finger Lake I felt a weird crunching lurch, like deep crusted snow settling. Except it wasn't the snow, it was the runner on my sled, my almost new, only two year old sled. Except the part of the runner that the rear portion of my sled was hooked to was now held on just by the runner plastic.

I limped down the Steps, praying that the flopping caboose wouldn't break the other runner, maybe in a worse place. I set up camp and took care of the dogs. I repacked my main sled with all those bulky items from the rear section – sleeping bag, cooker, and 5 gallon bucket. It looked like a crazy gypsy wagon, with the sled bag overflowing and the bucket strapped on top. No room to haul a dog if one needed a ride. No room to haul food and supplies for run across the Burn.

Once the dogs got a good rest I jettisoned my caboose section, and headed towards Rainy Pass. I had one long runner and one short, and every side hill, mogul, and dip in the trail threw me violently over towards the short runner.

The dogs were beautiful, energetic, and sparkling with joy. We pulled into Rainy after just a few hours. The team was ready to keep running down the trail, but the sled sure was not. We parked. And we waited. Waited. Waited.

The sled was not fixable. My spare sled was in McGrath, waiting for me there should I need it. Except I needed it here in Rainy Pass. Except there was a blizzard blowing in. Except there was no way to get it here.

We waited, hoping that someone else would scratch and loan me their sled. Teams stopped, camped, and moved on down the trail. We waited. The tail end stragglers came through, and still we waited. A few teams did scratch. No one had a sled we could use.

I had a whole year to think about it.