

## "But All Thinking Rids Us of God"

My mother's mother was a Jew. My grandmother was a Jew. She had three sisters. My grandmother and two of her sisters converted in the 1940's to marry Irish Catholic alcoholics. My grandmother died five years before I was born.

I never heard stories about my grandmother. I once asked my Irish Catholic grandfather about her. He smelled of whisky and Marlboro reds. Sometimes he let me inject the insulin into his stomach with plastic needles. But when I asked him about my grandmother he did not speak. She is dead.

I once asked my Catholic father about my grandmother. He had a thick mustache that was yellow from Tareyton Lights. Sometimes he let me drink from his can of Budweiser when no one was looking. "Her name was Lilian," was all that he said. She is dead.

I once asked my mother's Jewish cousin Mark about my grandmother. He spoke with a New York accent and never had a job for more than a few months. "She was my mother's oldest sister, and her maiden name was Cohen," was all that he said. She is dead.

I once asked my Catholic mother about my grandmother. She cut my toast into square halves. My mother had dark red hair, and no one else in her family had dark red hair. "She gave me a valium on my wedding day," was all that she said. She is dead.

I once asked a Catholic nun about my grandmother. She smelled like a thrift store book. Sister Miriam slapped me when I spoke during the Sunday mass at St. Francis of Assisi Church. "She is in heaven," was all that she said. She is dead.

I once asked a Catholic priest if there really was a heaven. He smelled like sweat. Father Alphonse pointed to a girl wearing a skirt and bending over, and let me drink wine after church when no one was looking. "What a silly question," was all that he said.

I never knew my grandmother. I have come to believe that no one knew my grandmother. She was a Jew. She married a Catholic. They raised a Catholic.

All of this was based on a book.

I read that book.

I never met my grandmother.