

Me I Am

I will never forget that day.

The white walls, his baseball cap. He told me being a nurse is a smart profession, a good job.

Wait, he knew I took after him, though, yeah?

He was a Catholic Italian from New Haven. They work hard.

First in his family to go to a four year college.

I loved the profound talk. Sitting with him. Just the two of us. Alone.

A nurse walked in to check his vitals...that doesn't count.

I mean, alone to really talk, that was often the case – after all, I sat on the first step.

Actually, the counter. In the kitchen. She never let me sit up on it, but he did.

I knew after I saw him it would be the last time.

Thank God my aunt, his sister, took me to see him.

She was so tired and didn't want to do it that day, but pushed herself. Hard.

She didn't get to go to college. Only he and my uncle did.

I called my Grandmother's house the next day. He was too weak to talk to me. He knew I called, though.

I trusted Grandma D when she told me that. Grandma said he called out to his father as he left, "Daddy's calling Jackie, Daddy's calling Jackie."

He was gone. Gone. Forever. No one knew what it was like or got it.

It wasn't fair. No other kids had to deal with that at my age. Why me?

Well, one kid did. Gerry. He was quirky and smart...

The one person who loved me no matter what, understood me, had late night chats with me about writing, art, music and life...was taken away.

16 years old. My whole life ahead. Hell, his whole life ahead. I already had enough pain when they split up, I didn't need that blow, too.

She was so unhappy, took it out on me...

She was hard on me, too. Baby genius, she called me. That's a lot of pressure.

Sister and Brother were born and life changed for her and me, she said.

Is that because of me.....or because of her?

When I tried to tell her how mad or sad I was, it got worse.

There was no warmth...no understanding. Life was hard for her. I see that now.

God, maybe I WAS bad. Maybe I could have been nicer to her. Why was she so cold?

I'm just grateful I made it out ALIVE. I have all you would want or need...I mean, things like a husband, career, home, two kids...hmm...no cats, though...but, I do have a quarantine puppy... So, why do I do this to myself? Why do I sometimes feel I need to escape from my own thoughts? I think it's the way she formed my rubber bands. You know, in my brain. They were stretched and pulled, and now sit the way they do. The good, the bad, the ugly. It's all there. I'm the perfect twist of dark and light. That's me. The twist. Heck, I know the key to happiness is knowing there is a dark side. That's the rub, you know? That's what gives me good ideas...makes me interesting, empathetic.

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But, it can haunt me and I can't control it. It's all about control she said. "You must have self-control, everything in moderation," blah, blah. Well, not blah, blah, because I believe in the moderation part, when I can actually abide by it. But, sometimes I want to – and do – blow! I blow! I can't help myself. Me I am, I am me. That's ok...right?

Why did I do that? Should I have said that? Am I normal? No, normal is boring! So, I'm not normal. Wait, I am normal! I have talents, I hold a job and the rest. What the fuck. Fuck her.

No, not fuck her. I do love her. Very much. She worked her ass off for us. Now is my time to write her a letter. #2020, baby. Just do it! I need to tell her, really tell her, what I have thought and felt over the years. I have always wanted to do that – for her...for myself. She's strong. Quite strong. TOO strong. I am sensitive, forever a little girl, in need of her love. But, I don't want to be told what do...or judged...anymore! I just want to feel I'm accepted – and loved. She says she does love me. Why isn't she hard on my siblings? I'm the oldest? I remind her.....of him?

By: Real. Life. Stuff.