Dragonflies and Other Ways to Survive

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June sixth will be here soon and I am not ready for it.  I am even less ready for October eighteen. June is such a lovely time to be born, everything is growing. I should be happy, you should be excited for your thirtieth, and yet, here we are, not knowing how to celebrate.

As I look around this time of year, I revel in all the beauty the world shows in her simple and complex ways.  The simple little green buds of rebirth on the trees and the complex science of their processing food, intake and outtake of chemicals and their silent communication.  They know about survival and determination, whether born on a rocky outcrop, insect infested land or rich fertile soil.   I am impressed. They emerge from the depths of a dark canal, face first, to take on any challenge and keep giving.

These new beginnings are mini lessons for me, to be curated and saved for “breaking the glass” times.  I store this in my file, only to be forgotten. I have had many springs in my life and know about surviving the winters, still June sixth approaches. I embrace my pain.

Some difficult times have been weathered, won and lost. I am host to guilt when needed, knowing when I have failed, to straighten up on my rocky outcrop and proceed through life. I’ve known when to take away a lesson learned and when to keep searching. I held pain’s hand, knowing troubles and suffering, and gauging when to shake it off, dislocating something in the process from the sheer impact.

As the sixth arrives, I prepare, like one would if a tornado siren let off.  You’d think I had enough practice, yet, it still cuts through my heart, you can’t be here to live, go to school, dance, be in my arms and one day, get married. The adoptions, laughs, trees planted, stories written and love shared are movements forward, yet the pain pierces through.  Have I secretly betrayed you with my “living”?

You had so many interests, loves, hugs, joys, and beauty to share.  They are infused in my life and they wrap around my heart and squeeze. Years ago, I wanted never to laugh or feel happiness, the guilt was smothering. But these same years have also sanded me down, through counseling, self-help books, even spiritual guidance from authors who claimed to communicate with the “other side”, family and dragonflies.

The dragonfly story sutured the rawness, leaving scar tissue in its wake.  Grandma gave me the little booklet that held a secret only someone with this pain could appreciate, the comparison and comfort of knowing Heaven. Thank God most do not know this calibur of loss

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and grief. Sure there are minefields all around us in life of suffering, but when you watch a child, your child, there is no measurement.

Still, I find a way, I talk to you every day and marvel at how you can still make me smile from your memories and being happy with so much life you lived in your six years. Always six,

always beautiful, you wrote on a paper you had to describe yourself in school. It hung on the refrigerator only to later be carved on the cold bronze of your gravestone. I fought to make sense of what my heart refused. The past tense they used to describe you on sympathy cards held in one hand screamed surreal, as I held papers just written days before from school in the other. Now, after twenty-three years of love and pain living in the same place, I am mending.

So, what can I give you on your special day? What can I do for you? Live a full life and say your beautiful name, time to time, honor your memory with a contribution, an act of kindness, or help someone in some small way, all of the above? What can I give to you, my beautiful daughter, Danielle, who died too young and left so much? Danielle, Danielle, Danielle.