

SHATTERED DREAMS

ANGEL DUST

As humans we die for the one we love
Maybe because the one we love
We can't live without

It's haunting me, taunting me
Telling me that I need you
Like a needle, I'm forcing you, pushing you inside of me
This compulsive obsession is draining the life out of me
Just the thought of me losing you
And I lose it

She my drug and I'm stung out
I know we fight, fuse, and argue, sometimes fall out
But you know that I'm coming back
A relationship of "The Dealer" and "The Fiend"
I'm always coming back

It's like she got that good work, but it still hurts
'Cause I'm giving her the "Best of me"
And the "Rest of me" is telling the "Best of me"
I want to be the person I "Used to be"
But the person I "Used to be"
Isn't nearly as happy as the person I have "Grown to be"

Therefore, I'm stuck in this rehab
Trying to make loneliness heal me
But I have to let you go
Because this love I have for you
Is killing me~

~ Corey T. Barnes

ACCEPT ME FOR WHO I AM

Remember the girl in school that sits in the back of the classroom by herself, alone and depressed?

You walk by this person everyday. You don't look her way unless someone comments on her weight or what she is wearing just to get a good laugh.

How can you be that mean and cruel to someone you don't know and have never tried to get to know?

I don't make fun of you, laugh in your face, comment on your weight or what you are wearing!

Why do I have to be the outcast, the one who cries herself to sleep and dislikes going to school because I don't want to get laughed and pointed at?

I just want to be a kid who has friends and to be accepted for who I am!

~ Rebecca Baker

HEAVENLY ANGELS

My mother had five girls.
They all have children but me.
I got sick one day and went to the doctor
And this is what he had to say:
"Shellie, you have little ones on the way."
I was so happy that I went rushing home
To tell my mother the news I heard today
'Cause she is my best friend.
We went to the store and I got a new shirt
That said "Baby '98."
I was happy as could be because
We bought a lot of new things for the babies.
But one day, I woke up in a lot of pain.
God had come and taken my babies away.
He had taken them up high.
This made me sad, alone, and blue.
I didn't know what to do.
So I turned to drinking, drugs, and other things.
I would fight people just to release some of my pain.
I hit rock bottom and tried to take my own life.
If it wasn't for God walking and holding me up through my
hard times
I wouldn't be here to watch my nieces and nephews run
and play.
So no matter how hard life comes down on you,
Don't let drugs be the road you choose.
If you put your faith in God
Things will work out no matter what.
Today is January 16, 2008
I, Shellie Hicks, wrote this
For my babies in heaven today.

With Love,
"Mommy"

Rest In Peace
Dakota Wayne and Shawnta Shantell
April 2, 1993

~ Shellie Hicks

PICKING UP THE PIECES

How can you go on when your world's been shattered?
She's still here, and that's all that matters.

So young and full of hope,
Yet you still find the courage to cope.

At night you dream of her smile that lights up the room.
When you awake, your day is filled with gloom.

You express your sorrow to those who listen,
Because you can't seem to take being without Tristan.

We love our cousins and two nieces.
Together we're still picking up the pieces.

An Ode to Tristan

~ Shannon Reynolds

WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN

I was twenty-one years old when I got pregnant with my first child. I was so happy. I felt like finally my prayers had been answered. At fifteen weeks, I had a check up with my doctor. It was time to hear the baby's heartbeat, but the doctor could not find one. Almost immediately they sent me to Bethesda Hospital for an ultrasound, but still no heartbeat could be found. I really can't describe the pain and anguish I felt or still feel.

After the ultrasound I was sent home and scheduled to come back a couple of days later. I didn't know how to handle this. I was devastated. I didn't know what to do, I couldn't sit, I couldn't stand, I couldn't eat because I felt like it was unfair for me to eat when my baby couldn't. A couple of days passed, and I was back in the hospital so the doctor could remove the baby. I stayed in the hospital for three days while they put some kind of pill inside me to open my cervix so the baby would slide down to the birth canal, but unfortunately it didn't work. The doctor sent me back home saying in the next couple of days my body would miscarry the baby on its own.

So almost a month went by, and I was still carrying a deceased baby inside me. The doctor told me they were going to send me to O.S.U., another hospital. The whole time these doctors had me on the run-a-round. All I could think about was my baby deteriorating inside me and if my body would get some kind of poison from that. I got to O.S.U., and they put sea weed sticks inside me. About eight hours later, I felt something warm gush out of me so I paged the nurse. She came in, checked me, and said she could feel the baby. She pulled out my stillborn baby.

It was so tiny but not gruesome at all, just a little tiny baby. I put my baby in the palm of my hand and just cried and cried. I kissed my baby and told it how deeply sorry I was

and I love it and then I said my good bye's. I got my baby cremated so it is with me all the time in mind and spirit. To this day I wonder what it would be like having two kids instead of one, and I always think about my baby that should have been.

~ Jessica M. Tate

MY MOM THOUGHT

Do you want to know the one thing about my life that I would change? It is something that happened to me years ago when I was about seven years old. My mom met a man named Norm (changed name) in church one Sunday. To her he seemed nice. She thought he was perfect. She met him in church and thought there could be no better place to meet a good man. She thought maybe he was God sent.

They soon married in that same church. I had begged her not to marry him; it did no good though because I couldn't tell her why. After they got married, we all moved into another home. She thought we were living as the perfect family.

The reason I would change that day Mom married Norm is because he raped and molested me for four years. It went on for so long because he had me too scared to tell. Then, finally, I confided in a friend who told her mom. Her mother told me I had to tell my mom and that everything would be O.K. eventually.

It took me a couple more days, but I finally got it all out. He had hurt me very badly in many different ways, both physically and emotionally. For instance, still to this day, I have a hard time talking to anyone about it. It has affected my relationship with my husband and also my past relationships. I have a difficult time trusting men and feel scared and uncomfortable when I am around them, especially when I don't know them very well, or when they are older than I am, or when no one else is in the room with us.

I thought I had blocked out memories of what Norm did to me, but they come back to me in my dreams. It's like he still has some control over me.

The day my mom met this man is the one thing about my life I would change. Shortly after she met him, he started hurting me, so if that day hadn't gone the way it did, none of this horror would have happened. As to his conviction for his crime, there wasn't any. He is a free man because there wasn't enough evidence, and the others he molested would not come forward to testify! This is the man my mom thought was going to be the perfect husband....

~ Jade Jones

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR

Child abuse is growing in numbers every day. When you turn on the news or read the newspaper, you hear about people abusing their children or other people's children. This is a sad but very true reality. This is my story...

About four years ago, I moved into the apartment where I now live. I met this woman who had a beautiful, blonde-haired, blue-eyed baby boy. He was about 10 months old. About three days later, she knocked on my door. She asked if I would watch her child for a few hours. I don't even believe she knew my name yet. She told me that she needed a break. She needed to get away for awhile, and she had no one else to turn to. I agreed to watch her son.

I took the baby inside and noticed he smelled badly of urine, so I decided to give him a bath. As I undressed him, I noticed little blisters all over his body, like bed sores. I ran some warm bath water and put him into the tub. He started screaming to the top of his lungs. I thought the water might be too hot for him, so I pulled him out and ran some cooler water, but the same thing happened. I decided to wash him off with a warm wash cloth and redressed him.

After a while, he was getting hungry and his mother had sent him no baby food. All I had was Spaghetti O's. I fed it to him, and I was shocked to see him eat a whole can. Afterwards I laid him down for a nap.

His mother finally arrived, and I expressed my concerns with her. She had told me that he was like this every time he returned from his father's house. I told her that I wouldn't let my child go back if the father couldn't care for him properly.

A few more days passed. She returned to ask if I would watch her child again, and I agreed. Only this time, he smelled like urine and cologne. It was like she was trying to cover up the smell of the urine, so I gave him another bath. The blisters were much larger and more inflamed, which really concerned me.

After his bath, I was putting some diaper rash cream on his bottom and noticed that his rectum looked as if he had been sexually abused. Without further hesitation, I called child services. They told me that they would look in to it if they felt the baby was in danger. When his mother returned to pick up the child, I told her that I had called child services. She had no reply and took the baby and left.

Five months later, I got a knock on my door at 3:30 a.m. on December 19, 2004. The words I heard from the other side of my door were a parent's worst nightmare. "Help! The baby's not moving!" I opened my door to find the mother's boyfriend holding the lifeless baby in his arms. I took the baby from him and placed him on my shoulder supporting his neck. I asked the boyfriend what had happened. He told me that the baby had fallen off the couch.

I took the baby into the kitchen and dialed 911. As I spoke with the dispatcher, I tried to talk to the baby. He would respond for a few seconds and go unconscious again. When the EMTs arrived they took the baby from me, checked his vital signs, gave him some oxygen, and then rushed him off to the hospital. I later found out that they took him to Children's Hospital where he was on life support for a few hours before he passed away.

After a few weeks, the boyfriend confessed what had actually happened to the police. This man received only three years in prison for what he did. Yes, only three years for a baby's life!

To this day, I still do not know what truly happened, but I do know that if help would have stepped in when it was asked for, that baby would still be alive today.

This is a prime example of child abuse that could have been stopped before it was too late.

~ Ashley D. Green

FATHER

I went all of my life with just my mother. My father left when I was very young. I saw very little of him when I was growing up. I felt like he was ashamed of me. If I was to pick a hero, it would be my mother. She has been by my side my whole life.

Just recently, since I moved back to Lancaster, Ohio, my father contacted me. I started working with him on his paper route. We get along like he has been there for me all of my life. I decided to move in with him in December, 2007, but I moved out in a month. We didn't exactly see eye to eye. Even though he is trying to make up for the past, sometimes it's just not enough. I feel that a child should have both parents growing up.

My father and I get along great now that I am older. But where was he when I needed him the most? When I was young I used to write him letters praying that he would write back, but all he did was laugh and toss them in the trash. All I want to know is if he loves me or if he is just being nice and trying to act like a "real dad" should act?

~ Matt Haynes

A VOICE OF A CHILD

I can hear your voice.
I can sense your fear.
I'm trying to cope in your womb
Nowhere to run or hide.

I can feel your pain.
You are so sad.
You wonder what's to gain?
Did I make you mad?

I feel the force of something pulling;
My life is going to be over soon;
What did I do?
What didn't I do?
How could this be?
You don't want me?

I will never have the chance
To see your face;
Hear your laugh;
Smell your scent.
I'm only four months.
Why did you choose this?
My face is being displaced.
My soul is being misplaced.
You chose this route;
You said yes to abortion.
Now I must pay.
Good bye
Forever
To the mother
I could have loved!

~ Mary E. Torres

TAKING THE LAST BREATH

Lying in the bed is a small fragile woman. Her face is worn and tattered by the years she has seen. The shadows under her eyes make the sparkle that she once had look dim.

Strands of silver hair streak the background of white that was once black as coal. Time has weakened her sense of thought and her physical being. She doesn't laugh anymore, nor does she hold her own. Not wanting to wake her, I just watch.

She wakes to say in a little above a whisper, "Jenny, my little waddling girl!" I stand up from the dust-riden chair to join her at the foot of her bed. I grab her little wrinkled hand and hold it, for tomorrow I may not have that chance. I watch her breathe; her chest heaves up and down like a fish out of water gasping for air. I ask, "Granny, you feeling okay today?" She replies, "I feel okay, no different than I normally do."

I know she is lying. I have witnessed this a thousand times; she is not ok. Her eyes show the troubled life she has lived and the hardships she has endured. The deep lines on her face show the death of four children she has witnessed, an alcoholic husband, and now a disease that she cannot control.

She is not aware that I know more than she thinks. I speak with my aunt, and she gives me all the harsh details. My aunt says to me, "Your grandmother will never get better. That is just the reality of the disease." I want to burst into tears because I know what that means. She was straight to the point so I asked, "Now what?" She replies, "There is nothing anyone can do. She will die from this!" I said to her, "Does grandma know?" She tells me, "Of course she knows. I could not hide something like this from her." I nod my

head and prepare to spend as much time helping out as I can.

When I return to the living room I pull up her covers and give her a teaspoon of apple sauce, cocktailed with the twelve medications she has to have for the day. She swallows hard to take on the mass she just received. She looks up and says to me in a soft voice, "If I had known that letting people smoke their damn cigarettes around me would make me a cripple, I never would have allowed it." I paused to watch the expression on her face. There was anger and sadness drifting in her eyes. I never thought that she would have to deal with the struggle of a disease that would take her life.

Today she is weary. She struggles with her thoughts and tries to cope with the pain of arthritis. Her lungs fill and release heavily as she breathes in her oxygen. The skin that shrouds her face is pale and shows dehydration. I take out some night gowns and put them in her bag. She is a strong but fragile being. I have never witnessed a woman with such courage. We sit and watch her gasp as though she is taking her last breath.

My aunt and I call 911 and prepare her for her journey, her last destination, the hospital. This is the typical day of a Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseased (COPD) patient.

~ Jennifer Samons

MOTHER'S LAST CHRISTMAS

Christmas time is coming; I have so much to do.
I've got to get a Christmas tree, to decorate for view.
I'll buy each one a present and put it under the tree.
They need not buy me anything. It's them I want to see.

I'll cook a big dinner. Oh, I can hardly wait
To see their gleaming faces at the food upon their plate.
Well dinnertime has passed and no one came around.
And I don't understand; they just live across town.

I'm going to clean off the table and put the food away.
Why didn't they call or come around today?
I'll put all the presents away and take down the tree
And store them in the attic. Maybe someday they'll
remember me.

Well, it's evening now. The light is getting dim.
I'm going to kneel and pray for God to watch over them.
I'll turn all the lights off and pray, before I go to bed.
Those were the last words she wrote. By her bed they
found her dead.

~ Margaret Moore

BEFORE I SAY GOODBYE

I'm the reason for your sadness
How I wish to be your happiness
I'm the reason for your shame
How I wish to be you pride
I'm the reason for you pain
How I wish to be your strength

How I wish you knew I would never try to harm you.

I'm still here
in each thought that flows from your mind
in each sigh that comes from your soul
in each thing that you can see, smell, taste, hear and touch.

How I wish you knew I would never try to harm you

Now, let me give you a forever kiss
and you'll remember me in the children's smile
and you'll remember me in the warm summer
and you'll remember me when you see stars high in the sky
and in ever simple and amazing things that you'll do... you'll
Remember me.
I'll be forever near, for I live within your heart...

Mommy

~ *Niny F. Rosso*

MONKEY BUSINESS

When I was a little girl I had a friend whose name was Vhane See. She was the only child in her family. Her parents worked at a farm. We went to school together in a middle school in Laos.

One day Vhane's parents brought a monkey into their house. When they went to work, the monkey had to stay home alone. Every day the monkey was good in their home. But one day Vhane's parents came home tired from work. They didn't pay attention to the monkey. So the monkey began jumping around the house. They got angry with the monkey, and the monkey got mad too. (Monkeys with long tails get angry very easily.)

Monkey climbed up to the roof and ran back and forth. Monkey grabbed some grass from the roof, threw it down, and spit on his owner. The owner was so mad at the monkey that he took a bamboo stick to punish him, but the monkey ran away to the roof again.

The next day everybody went to work. The monkey stayed home. The monkey was still angry from the day before. He found a lighter and began to burn the house. His owners didn't know about the fire, but the neighbors saw it and called people to come and stop the fire. It was too late because the grass roof burned so quickly.

Then Vhane's parents came home. When they saw that the house had burned down, they were shocked and passed out.

This is a true story that can teach people who have an animal like a monkey in their homes. Please don't leave your monkey alone because monkeys can be dangerous.

~ Elizabeth Sacksith

OH DEER - OH DEER

Oh deer, Oh deer
As I'm sitting here
And Mother Nature calls

I set my cross-bow over there
Oh deer, Oh deer.

A trophy buck happens by
And here I am squatting over here
And my bow is over there
Oh deer, Oh deer

Ten yards away
He turns and looks
And my bow is over there
Oh deer, Oh deer

As the trophy buck runs away
Oh deer, Oh deer

~ Ronald W. Fugate

RACCOON AND ROOSTER

Raccoons and roosters are not friends. Raccoons always want to hunt roosters.

One day a raccoon found a rooster resting under a bush. The rooster was very afraid, and he flew to a branch of a tree. The raccoon hid himself under the tree and waited for the chance to hunt and eat the rooster.

But the rooster wouldn't leave the branch, so the raccoon decided to pretend to be a friend of the rooster. He said, "Why are you afraid of me? We could be best friends." When the rooster heard the nice voice of the raccoon, he relaxed and began to sing a song to the raccoon.

The rooster complimented the rooster's singing. Then he said, "Your father sang better than you because he closed his eyes when he sang. If you close both eyes to sing, you would sing more elegantly than everybody else." The trusting rooster believed his strange friend, and he did what the raccoon told him to do. So, in this way, the raccoon was able to catch the rooster by his neck, kill him, and eat him.

This story is a lesson. It has been told by people from the oldest generations to the youngest generations in the country of Laos. It teaches us to not always trust someone who is a stranger and pretends to be nice to you.

~ Eastland-Fairfield Group Project
Khounkhan Khamvongsa
Zheyan Pearsall
Xeng Veopraseuth

A SECOND CHANCE

Up until the time I was fifteen my life was great. I was captain of the cheerleading squad, popular in school, a straight A student, and lived in a nice house. What was not so great about my life was all the secrets my family kept. Two weeks before my sixteenth birthday my stepfather was placed in jail for six months for non payment of child support. That's when all the secrets began to unravel.

I soon discovered that life was not so great after all. During the six months that my stepfather spent in jail, my mother began to experiment with harsh drugs, which she soon became very addicted to. She and my stepfather had split, which meant that we had to move from our home. Over the next year we moved three times, and I had begun to skip school more and more each month. By the time I was seventeen my mother's drug habit was even worse; it was like she wasn't even my mother anymore.

Toward the end of my junior year in high school, I met a great guy named Mike. At that point and time in my life, he was the best thing that had ever happened to me. After only dating for eight months Mike moved in with my family and me because his home life was even worse than mine. One month after he moved in, I found out that I was pregnant. I was now eighteen and in my senior year, my mother was at her worst with her drug use, and I was lucky to see her three times a week. I was scared to death, and I knew this was not the right time in my life to bring a baby into this world.

Mike stayed calm. He already had a son who was born when he was only seventeen. Soon after I found out that I was pregnant, I started to work so I could save for the baby. I never saw my mother so I had no idea how bad she had gotten. On January 1, 2006, I miscarried my baby. That was the hardest thing I had ever had to go through. I still

continued to go to school and work everyday, but it grew harder and harder each day to focus when I knew my mother was out there somewhere using drugs.

Four months passed, and I was still working hard to get my life back on track. One day while I was at work I received a phone call from my brother saying that when he went in to wake my mother, she was barely breathing, so he called 911. The squad took her away. In that two-minute phone call my whole world came tumbling down. No matter how bad my mother's drug use was, she was still my best friend. All I could think was that I now had lost her forever.

As soon as I hung the phone up, I ran to my car and flew to the hospital. When I arrived they had my mother in the ICU unit. I did not even recognize her. The next couple of days were hard, but I never gave up hope. Two months before I was due to graduate, I dropped out of school so that I could be by my mother's side. After 52 days in the hospital she was starting to become herself again. The day after she was released from the hospital she entered a drug detox center. On May 6, 2006 she was released from there and on her way to a better life.

Soon after I found out that I was pregnant once again, only five months after I had miscarried my first baby. My mother promised me that she was going to do whatever she had to do to stay clean for her new grandchild. On November 4, 2006, Mike and I got married. I was only eighteen, and I felt as if my childhood was snatched away from me over night. On February 13, 2007, I gave birth to my son. It was the happiest day of my life, and right there by my side the whole time were my mother and Mike. I thought I had the world in my hands.

My mother had over a year clean and sober and Mike and I were doing great until November 8, 2007, my twentieth birthday. Mike came in from work carrying two cases of beer. He knew that I hated drinking, and he didn't even

seem to care. After fighting for a good hour Mike threw our nine-month-old child and me out in the freezing cold. I was in shock. I had no idea what to do. Two hours later my mother showed up with balloons and came to surprise me for my birthday, only to find that she was the one that was surprised. She found my baby and me out in the cold. That was the day she rescued me, and I knew I had gotten my mother and best friend back. It was one of the worst days of my life and one of the best.

Now I am living with my mother and going through a divorce. It's hard, but it's what I need to do for me. I am also going back to school to earn my GED. It's like my mother is helping me get a second chance at life like I helped her to.

~ Megan Marie Smith