

Goodbye

by

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I understand death to be a natural conclusion to life; no one lives' forever right. I lost my ex-husband and the father of my sons. It didn't happen in one day; he lingered after a massive heart attack for about five days. I found myself in the middle of a story I never expected to be a part of. I wasn't ready to say goodbye, we had things to do, arguments about the grandkids and whose house they would visit for the holidays. I loved this man for the better part of my adult life; he made me a mom, we grew up together and now, the possibility of goodbye has devastated me.

I want to scream about it, but I don't, I go make coffee. The sun streams through the kitchen window dimly illuminating the space. I sit at the table. *What am I doing here?* The bittersweet tang of the coffee explodes on my taste buds. I wanted to go there or go to a place where I could connect with him. Maybe on my knees is the proper place to connect, I'm not much for that sort of thing. This is a diabolical cycle of angst, it's gripped so tight around me, I can't breathe. Is this a time for prayers to the creators? No answers soothed me, in my struggle to understand, I sat in the solitude of my thoughts. I would go to church, I would pray, I would give an offering for a better outcome.

Driving along in my car, Brownie, bouncing up and down looking out of the window and panting seemingly happy in her element. Shocking me a bit because Brownie was a mess whenever she's in the car, her frenetic bouncing is an unexpected bonus. I continue humming a tune and watched the road. The day was beautiful, sun filtered through the trees, wind blew warmly, despite the niggling feeling things weren't what they seemed. The road ahead, blacktop

gleamed, no traffic impeded my progress I wondered how long it will take to get to where we're going.

"Are you still behind me?" I said. My eye's darted from the road to the mirror judging the distance. "I don't see your truck Nick," I said. A small amount of hysteria colored my tone. Through the rear-view mirror, the hazy roads made it hard to see a silhouette inside, although the vehicle was driving in the distance behind me. "Oh, I see you now, man you better speed up, so I don't lose you," I said. The road started to curve as we rolled towards the bend, instantly my heart skipped a beat, "why are you not answering me?" I asked.

"Pat, I see you, it's okay, I can catch up," Nick said. "It's okay, I'm okay Pat," Nick repeated, you're going to be okay," Nick said yet again with a sobering ring of finality to his tone.

"What is going on up ahead?" I said, choosing to ignore the words hanging heavy in the air between us. "Nick I may have to stop," my shirt pulsed with the dread. "Please catch up to me, I can't lose you." A panicked numbness spread through my limbs, my heart a cacophony in my chest and ears, lips stuck together, there is nothing to swallow. "NICK, I can't see you anymore and I will HAVE to stop, do you hear me?" I said. The vehicle stopped; I can no longer see Nick's car.

The under-pass was deep, endless, no light filtered through, I don't want to focus on it, instead I looked at all the people. I pulled to a stop at the entrance, a group of people stared off into the empty field beyond. *What's going on out there?* I thought. Something pulled at my soul so tender; it resonates from deep inside, it beckoned me out. *What are they all looking at?* I

thought. With Brownie pulled tight I reach the group of people, everything stops; the numbness fell away and my feet took me closer.

“AAAAWWW, what a cute dog,” a middle-aged lady said. “What kind of dog is she?” the lady said.

Confused and caught off guard, I responded, “she’s a miniature schnauzer,” “her name is Brownie” I said. The reached for her; and I allowed her to do so. I continued to the field it’s impossible to resist, so I walked toward a field of light. A peaceful acquiescence consumed me, undulated through my body, my heart, my soul. All my senses were alight with a calm I’ve never experienced before. I saw IT ahead, a brilliance just beyond the horizon, consumed me while inoculating my soul.

I watched a mosaic canape of colors, indescribably beautiful I can’t look away, a familiarity revealed the connection between me and HIM, my eyes welled. The colors coalesced, mixed, formed into a larger figure. Nick was standing in the horizon with the most peaceful emotions leaking off his aura, immersed in the colors. “Pat, I’m good, I’m at peace...it’s time,” the voice said. *There is no doubt I am dreaming now*, I think to myself, refusing to acknowledge what my heart knows. “Wake up” I screamed, hoping to sit up in my bed, to shake off the cobwebs that trapped me.

I wanted to wake up to a call, saying “*he pulled through, that he woke up from his coma,*” I wanted him HERE for his sons, I don’t want to let go. Instead, I must get the courage to let him go in peace, to release all that I wish could have been and focus on loving what once was. It seemed appropriately fitting that we part this way, we whirled, we danced, we lived, loved and lost. The seeds of our union will carry us into infinity. “Bye Nick,” I said. Watched as the

figure turned and blended into the glorious sky of colors. With a brilliant smile he faded away, I awoke with his name on my lips, Nick's gone and he came to say GOOD-BYE.