Momma

Remembered

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By

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Here are some poems remembering mothers. Some are my experiences, others from discussions with friends. Enjoy.

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**Momma**

Momma outlived Poppa by thirteen years

in the same old house and same lumpy bed

her pillow often wet with tears

The tears weren’t so much from misery

or that she missed the Old Man that she put up with 47 years

but that he went and died before their Golden Anniversary.

We tried to make it easy for her

new TV, a microwave, new sheets and towels and clothes

and she would always “oo” and “ah” and purr.

She finally got old and tired and died.

Cleaning out the place, we found every item labeled

and gifts rewrapped and even bows neatly tied

and her burial clothes lay out and the funeral fully planned

and fully paid for with burial instructions

placing her on top of the Old Man.

We miss them both on Mother’s and Father’s Days

We leave flowers; stand in the shade of a cemetery oak

Reminisce and never leave in haste.

+++++

**1**

**A Stromberg-Carlson Radio**

I just heard a song that took me back to 1943.

This was the summer before I started the first grade.

It was hot and still and only two little brothers

to play with in our two room house in an orange grove

in the Lower Rio Grande Valley with a hand pump

and a one holer.

My father had painted an appliance store

and got a radio got as partial payment,

an ivory Stromberg-Carlson radio.

This particular day my mother turned in on to KRGV

in Harlingen thinking music would help us nap.

"In the Big Rock Candy Mountain

all the cops have wooden legs, ..."

"If the ocean was whusky and I was a duck

I'd dive to the bottom and never come up."

And then they played

"Old Shep is gone where the good doggies go."

and I cried. My mother tried to explain

that it was just a song and that Ole Shep

wasn't even a real dog but I cried.

That song still chokes me up.

+++++

**2**

**THE SIP**

Momma said, "Git yer own glass

you'll git germs and catch yer death."

But she was a grownup

and I wanted to be big

so I snuck a sip

a sweet sip

from her glass

while she wasn't looking.

She was right.

I caught my death from her

but also life

and growing up

and growing wise

and growing old

from just one sip

one sweet sip

+++++

**3**

**Two Waterford Wine Glasses**

My mother had a pair of Waterford crystal wine glasses

she kept in a in a teak box lined with blue-velvet

that she kept safely stored in her cedar chest.

On their anniversary she got them out

and she and my father had a sip of sherry.

When I was about eight years old

the little girl next door was over visiting my mother

who was showing Janie the treasures in her cedar chest.

I was hot and I asked for a glass of water.

Janie wanted one also so I asked my mother

if we could use her fancy glasses.

Janie refused to drink out of the Waterford wine glasses

fearing she would get drunk.

Ten years later my parents had a run of bad financial luck

My mother gave me the teak box and the Waterford glasses

when I graduated high school.

I joined the Navy and asked her to hold on to the glasses

and that she and Dad should continue using them

until I returned from scattering my wild oats.

I eventually got married.

We enjoyed these Waterford glasses for special occasions.

Mom and Dad were gone but we had a son of our own.

One afternoon I came home from work

to find my son and a friend had drunk Kool-Aid

from these glasses and had chipped the rim of one.

We told him this was no big thing and put the glasses

into their blue-velvet lined teak box.

Years later it was time to downsize into a retirement village.

An estate sale was arranged to reduce the clutter.

The estate sale manager asked about the teak box

with the chipped glass hinting that no one would buy this.

I gave the glasses to my son and told him not to spill them.

They were full of memories.

+++++

**4**

**SUN SHOWER**

Mid September afternoon

Under a blue fall sky with thunder bumpers

Shaded by a tall oak

Sitting

Reading

A cloud passes overhead

Passing onwards with the jet stream

Dappled sun returns

With a light sprinkle

Small, cold droplets

Evaporating

Cooling

My mother described this

As a Sun Shower

We three kids playing in the yard

Caught in a Sun Shower

Ran to her protection

“It’s just a Sun Shower and will give you luck”

That Sun Shower

Was effective for 75 years

How long will this one last?

Another day at a time?

+++++

**5**

**I had a Rose for you but**

Hi, Mom and Dad. I know its been a while.

I had a rose for you

but I just came from a funeral.

He was no one I particularly cared about.

I don't even know his name

and I'm sure I never saw him before.

I was coming here with a rose for your marker

when I saw a woman dressed in black

and a priest saying words

over a casket with no flowers.

So I walked over and stood beside the coffin.

Without looking she said, "He was a good boy".

I agreed.

"The drugs killed him."

"That is sad", I consoled.

"The Army taught him about drugs",

and she started to weep.

The priest had finished his words

and put his arm around her shoulders.

She wept softly.

"He must have loved his country," I replied.

The priest put out his hand,

"Bless you, my son."

"I didn't know him", I said.

The priest looked curious.

I turned and put your rose

on the casket in the open grave.

"No mother of a brother in war

should bury her son alone," I explained.

Now your rose in interred for eternity.

I'll bring you another next week.

+++++

**6**

Momma’s Glasses

Once in those ancient times

On Friday afternoons after school

One of my chores was to clean Mom’s glasses

Her bifocals were greasy and speckled with dust

So I washed them in soap and water

I had pumped from the well in the back yard

And shined them up with a clean dish towel

She thanked me with a cookie

And had clean glasses for the week end

This continued into her nursing home

Now my glasses get cruddy

My son is not available so I clean them myself

And remember those ancient times

+++++

**7**

**Picture on a Pony**

In the Zocalo in Saltillo

On Easter Sunday afternoon

After church

Families walk around

Enjoy an ice cream

Sit in the shade of the Palo Blanco trees

Waiting for the fotografiar

With his wooden horse

Serapes and charro hats

Big bellow camera on a wooden tripod

He arrives and the children gather

Chacho in a sombrero!

Maria in a flowery skirt!

A photographs for Momma and Abuelita

Pictures for a hundred years.

+++++

**8**

**Night**

Night enters through my window

Framed in velvet blackness of the walls

It seems to make only a dent in the inner darkness

This night is 1% starlight

3% light of a sliver moon

20% stray ribbons of coolness

10% sounds of a distant train

7% rustling of unseen night life

59% memories and dreams

Barely illuminating pictures hanging on the wall

Framed views of an alien world of light

Snapshots of people and lighted landscapes

Alien to the night that sucks up all but the frame

Perhaps I should go out into the night

Bathe in the night

Inhale the song of a mockingbird atop a mesquite tree

Join the unseen life in the night

Instead of lying here immersed in darkness

Warm and waiting for the dawn

+++++

**9**

See You Later

Rest in Peace