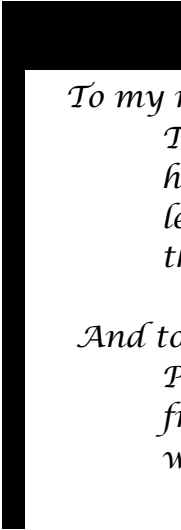


Mother Where Art Thou?



Jessica Newby



*To my mother,
Therapist, friend, and
hero. Whose choices,
lessons, and story made
this book possible.*

*And to my father,
Parent, teacher, and
friend. Who has been here
with me Through it all.*

Prelude

This discovery is the kind that leaves a mark. I will not miss the events that I blacked out which occurred when I opened the bathroom door to find a syringe in my mother's arm.

Looks of embarrassment and rage overwhelmed her face both at the same time. I never want to be in the position I was in that night when I had to make the decision to get in the game, or to watch from the sidelines. I remember having the most unfamiliar scent hit my nose when I opened the door, and in no more than a few moments my mother showed her true colors. One of the only things that I could recall was thinking about my childhood while the two of us collided with the floor in a struggle over addiction. I remember trying to hold myself back, after everything that she had taught me not to be.

She was my foundation, the reason for my life. Now my base support for everything I planned to accomplish was rolling around on the floor with her 15 year old daughter. We were like two dogs in a cage fighting over a piece of steak.

I made the two best choices I made in my life that evening. I opened that bathroom door, and then had my father get my a plane ticket out of there as soon as he could.

It's strange how your mind remembers when it forgets. I do not remember most of the actions that took place or the words that were exchanged that night. I do remember the look on my mother's face, and the accomplishment I had felt. The memories I blacked out that night, will be with me for the rest of my life. I will never know what would have happened if I did not open that door, but I do know that what I revealed behind it had been going on for a while. It did not happen all at one time, but in a series of events. This discovery was the most devastating in my life.

I was raised in Lyndonville, Vermont, and neighboring towns around Lyndonville. I lived with my mother until I was thirteen years old, and saw my father every other weekend. My parents divorced somewhere around the time I turned six years old. Although at such a young age, I understood the separation was for the best, because I had witnessed most of the altercations they had shared. They never really saw eye-to-eye and I liked them better as two individuals, rather than an arguing, miserable couple.

When they separated, my mother got a house with another man, with no regard for the domestic abuse or for her children, who were unfortunate bystanders to all of this pain. He used to throw her down the stairs, spit on her, throw lamps at her, and even go as far as to bite her. Despite the fact that my brother, sister, and I had warned her of his temper,

she was unwilling to sacrifice her consistency, home, and stability, for homelessness and loneliness. The first huge fight my brother, sister, and I witnessed seemed to open her eyes. I called the cops on him and my older brother stabbed him in the hand with a steak knife. That was also the night that my mother's 'soon to be fiance' 'went to jail, which seemed like a fresh start for all of us, and it was, for awhile.

Two months after he went to jail, mom appeared lost. Even though that man had treated her like dirt, she still loved him. For what reason, I will never fully know. Maybe it was because it was all that she had known. Mom did not know where else to go, or who to talk to about anything. She cried for days on end, right through her children's support and reinforcement.

Just weeks later, my mother's parents passed away. Her sister, my Aunt Sandy, made the phone call that delivered the news. The only part of the conversation I can recall is mom screaming,

"No, no, no, no, no!" and dropping to her knees.

I had no idea as to how I was supposed to handle the situation. At the time I believed it was my fault that I did nothing, but later came to understand that there was nothing I could do. I was so distraught and helpless. I cried for mom everyday because I could not imagine what she was going through.

I was 11 years old when my parents re-married. Mom, David, Susan, and I had been evicted from our house. I knew she loved the house and beautiful garden she maintained, but at the same time she knew that the house was bound with horrible memories.

Dad and mom moved into an apartment in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, where they stayed together for three days. I am still not sure of what notion was put into either of their heads that the relationship was going to work again. It served as a false hope for my mother. She was using my father as a rebound support system, but I always believed his intentions were completely innocent. I think part of the reason my dad got back together with her was to let her know he was there for her and knew she needed help. They were re-married at the court house on a Friday, and that following Sunday mom was dragging my brother, sister, and I to a hotel room because she had no place left to go. I thought this choice was selfish of her. Dad had an apartment and we could have very easily stayed there, but I would have felt guilty for leaving her alone, after everything she had been through.

We stayed in that hotel for a few weeks until mom found a place in the trailer park. While we lived with mom, dad picked up and moved to Melbourne, Florida. The details after that remain blurry to me. I am still not sure how it all came to be but my younger sister and I wound up going to

school in Melbourne shortly afterwards. Dad and his girlfriend had a beautiful house they had rented from an elderly couple who stayed in Tingley's Marina. I was in the sixth grade. My younger sister Susan was a fourth-grader. Nothing could have gone wrong. I was finally relaxed and did not have to worry about seeing mom so upset all the time.

Shortly afterwards mom moved to Florida with her new boyfriend and my older brother David. They had been evicted from the trailer park, and had nobody else to turn to except my father. Because of previous experiences, I thought it was going to be a disaster between my parents, but we did not even live together long enough to witness results.

Two months after mom moved in, dad was arrested and taken back to Vermont for a warrant based on fines he had already paid. Mom and her boyfriend hit rock bottom around the same time, convincing him to hitch a ride back up North with my father's girlfriend. This left my mom, older brother David, younger sister, and I alone. Once again, my mother was all by herself with no resources. Except this time she had no idea where she was, and didn't know a single person. She could not afford the house, so we moved into a one room efficiency in Tingley's Marina, where she eventually met another man. Coincidentally, this man is the guy who had a confrontation with my father, resulting in a call to the Brevard County Police Department.

That was where her drug habit started, or rather when I was openly exposed to it. I was only 11 years old at the time, but I knew something was wrong when she became too paranoid to cook dinner, in fear of lighting our 3-room home on fire. Seldom did she wake up to take my sister and me to school, and my older brother almost flunked out of his freshman year in high school. She would admit to me five years later that the reason she neglected us in Melbourne was because she was smoking crack with her boyfriend in the marina.

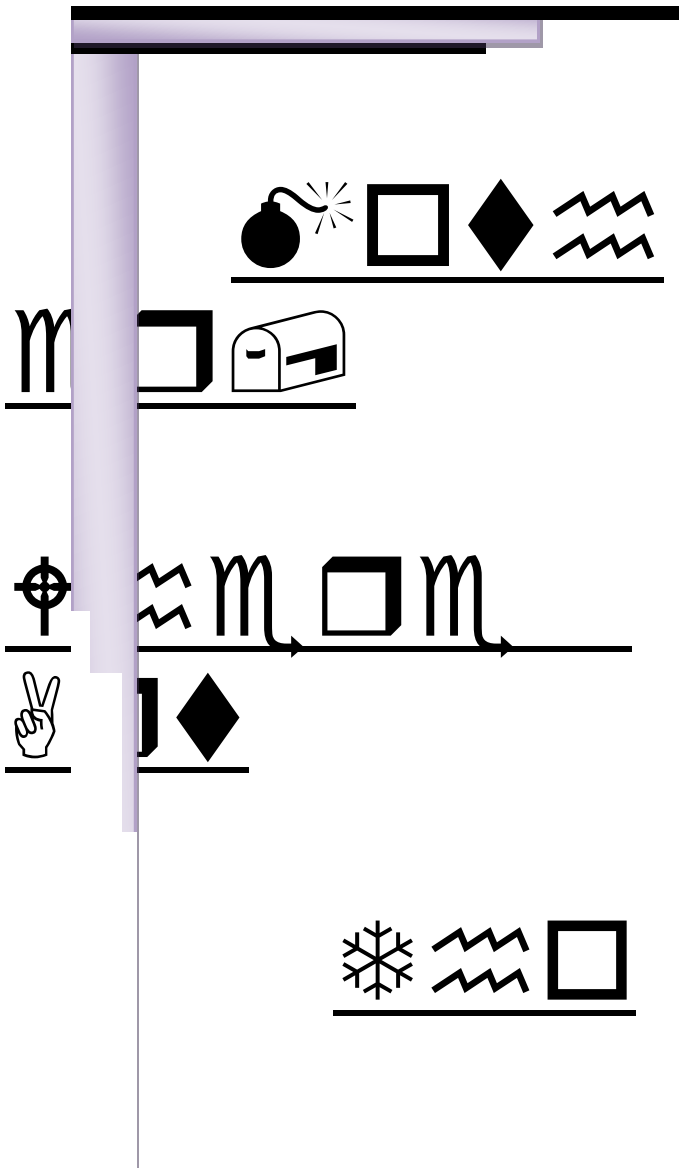
My father came to pick up my younger sister, Susan, and I as soon as he could. My brother went to Pennsylvania to live with his biological father. At that time, mom was incapable of supporting herself, let alone all four of us. We moved back up North to Vermont, while my mother moved in with a man in Rochester, New Hampshire. Even though she only moved two hours away from my father's house, I didn't see her for another three years.

When dad saved enough money to leave Vermont again, he did. I was 14 years old and had just graduated from eighth grade when we left for

Florida. We stayed in Bulow Campground for a week before dad found a beautiful, two-story house with chandeliers in every room. I loved that house. We lived in a town 30 minutes outside of Daytona called Palm Coast, which was the same town my parents resided in when I was born in 1992: The same year Palm Coast was established. I was in my freshman year when I managed to get myself in quite a bit of trouble, which included getting kicked out of school. My mom still lived in New Hampshire and I talked to her nearly every day. She reminded me about her cool new house and exciting job at Foster's Daily Democrat. She made the suggestion that I come to live with her in Rochester in an effort to start over and to get myself out of trouble. I bit like a suckerfish.

Well, let's just say her situation was not all she cracked it up to be. She could hardly find the energy to get out of bed and seldom made it to work on time. She was always high and I rebelled against the thought of it. It was my sophomore year. The second year of high school I ultimately failed. I began to put the pieces together; ignored domestic abuse, numerous absent school days, missing work, and not being able to take care of her kids. I realized what had been going on all along.

I always thought my mother had been quite selfish in her actions, but had been convinced she had good justifications. I was with her through everything she had endured. The divorce, the abuse, and the death of her parents. All of these struggles are the things that made me strong enough to push through my high school career. If it wasn't for these experiences, I would not have been able to explain or justify my mother's addiction with anything. It is also because of these experiences and the incredible strength my mother had during them that I still stand next to her, even after everything she has put me through. She knows I will stand in the front lines and fight for her. As long as she does for me what I did for her. I patiently walked with her through her story. Now it is time that she returns the favor.





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Difficulty Writing

*The easiest thing
For me to do,
Is to write.
My whole life
Writing has been
My internal escape.*

But when you write

*About your mother killing herself,
It isn't very easy.*

*Looking back on it,
Seems like the easiest part.
Then I begin to write about it.*

*I guess this
Is for the best
In every way.
This must be my escape.*

*When she reads this book,
I hope she takes
a long, hard look
In the mirror,
And realizes
What she did to us.*

Part One:

BEFORE THE ADDICTION



“No one is immune from addiction; it afflicts people of all ages, races, classes, and professions.”

-Patrick J. Kennedy

Early Parenthood

-
Forced to grow up
by getting pregnant so young.
A great contribution to stress.
A good excuse to run.

To have a child
At such a young age,
With an abusive man
filled mom with rage.

Just a start to the hardships
She was bound to endure.
Somewhere it took a turn for the
worst.
Drugs were the cure.

The Divorce

We moved our stuff
Into mom's boyfriend's place
while dad was in jail.
The situation got less rough,
But she could not erase
the fact that she was going to fail.

I told her more than once
This new guy wasn't right,
But dad was in jail,
Their marriage had failed.
That was why she was willing
to put up such a fight.

The days went by.
And dad had gotten out.
Mom and her boyfriend
were just fine.
I had not seen her cry,
She was up and about.
The truth revealed itself in time.

Death in the Family

We made it to Philadelphia.
Mom had six hours left
to live.
Even though,
It was her parents

Who were dying.

I remember thinking
To myself,
“She is going
to lose it.”
Little did I know,
We were about
to lose everything.

Part Two:

DURING THE
ADDICTION

“Life is boring when you’re clean. It’s all the free time you have with nothing to do.”

- My mother

Chapter 1

ROCHESTER, NH
2005

Summer 2005

My mother looks horrible,
From when I saw her last.
She told me she had moved on,
And left drugs in her past.
Her complexion is hazy,
She keeps falling asleep.
Her make-up is not precise,
Hair looks unkempt for weeks.

She keeps calling me Susan,
That is my younger sister's name.
It is now that I swallow and say,
 " I am sick of your games."
 You always lie to me,
which hurts because I understand.
I know it is hard to deal with life,
 without your mom and dad.
I know every one of your boyfriends
 Beat you half to death.
 I am not here to judge.
I'm here because I'm all you have left.
 If nothing else works,
 Your motivation can be me.
I've been standing by your side,
 And I will until you are free.
I understand what you are going through,
 And it is probably rough.
 But it's running me downhill,
 and getting me into drugs.
 So please save us,
 Or do whatever you choose.
 But if you don't stop it now,
There is so much more you will lose.

Living with Addiction

Alone again.
I'm with my mom again.
A disaster waiting to happen.
I'm out that window,

As soon as she
falls asleep with the lights out.
I've never treated
mom like this.
Guilty is what I feel,
But she hurts me.
I ignore her.
She gets worse.
I act like nothing
is wrong.
Am I encouraging her?
What do I do?
What did I do wrong?

Sophomore Year

Hitting my mother was
The last thing I wanted to do.
But she would not smarten up,
And I had something to prove.

How dare she disappear,
then try to make me rules.
I know she's getting high,
And I haven't been to school.

When I come home at night,
She is already passed out.
Fell asleep with a cigarette,
burnt a hole in the couch.

The T.V is still on,
The front door
Isn't closed very tight.
Her purse is on my left.
Her drugs are on my right.

I haven't been home in a week,
She calls the cops on me day by day,
But I show up occasionally.
She's too high to find me anyway.

Heroin

Please rescue me,
from this horrible place.
It is the addiction

I cannot face.

I have got to push through this,
But it is horrible here.
It is full of needles, narcotics,
depression, failure, constant fear.

I want my old life back,
This place makes me cry.
I want my mother back.
She needs to stop getting high.

I know I have to prevail.
I'm bigger and better than this,
But I'm getting pulled under,
And I need to find a way through it.

Like Mother, Like Daughter

I forget my childhood.
Even though I didn't
have much of one.
I have forgotten memories

that never really existed.
They only existed because of her,
because she was there for me.
She never really was though,
And that just hit me hard.
I guess this is God testing me.
Testing my strength. He believes
I will follow in her footsteps.
He believes this just as much as
I believe in him.
The funny thing is,
I remind myself of her everyday,
And this becomes
A heart wrenching question
Of if I will end up like her.
And I scream inside,
Because if that starts to happen,
I am not sure of how
I am going to stop it.

My Demons

No, I cannot explain it.
But it eats at me at night.

With a ghastly jaw of teeth,
Gnawing at my sanity.
Not stopping until I am emotionless.
The more I think, the less I feel.
The less I feel, I'm positive this is real.
I create lies, to cover up
The situation this addiction
has become.
A temporary solution
to a permanent problem.
Am I just running?
Just like she is?
I fight off the horrible monster.
Give me back my sanity!
So I can breathe.
Some beautiful release
of nothingness,
Would satisfy this feeling
of emptiness,
And relieve my pain.

Chapter 2:

LYNDONVILLE, VT
2005-2006

Mom &I

When I look at myself
In the mirror,
The only thing I see
Is my mother.
It is more than

The blonde hair,
and the blue eyes.
It goes deeper.
She is always high,
Because she cannot cope
With the loses of life.
Neither can I.
She sits around all day
With no motivation
since her life burnt down.
I know inside she's crying.
I see her try
To do the best she can,
And I appreciate it,
But she looks stupid.
It is not that I blame her
for getting high.
I understand why she does,
But why involve me?
She has opened doors
in my life.
Very bad doors,
And I slowly start
To see myself becoming
Something I am not.
That something is her.

Turning into her

I judged mom
for getting into drugs.
Here I am

Doing the same
Damn thing.

If it wasn't for her
Getting high
I wouldn't have
a reason to.

In most ways
She pushed me to this.
I would normally
Never consider something
like drugs.

Until I saw her
Doing them like,
like it was nothing.
They helped her problems.
What about mine?

Maybe if I
Get high
I will forget that
She always is.
but maybe not.
I see what
These drugs do to her.
The peace

is only temporary.

I start to realize
Why she is addicted.
Suddenly I have forgotten about
EVERYTHING.
My head begins to float,

And even though
I cannot hold
My eyes open,
I'm completely aware
of everything around me.

I fall into
A deep sleep,
And dream of how things used to be.

Cloud of Screams

Weightless I am.
Or so it seems.

Top heavy I float.
on a cloud of screams.

Higher than ever,
through a sky of red.
accompanied by fear.
drifting half dead.

My God is up here somewhere,
But faithless I feel,
While floating into nothingness.
This seems extraordinarily real.

Oh no! Save me! Save my falling mass.
This nothingness has set me free.
For gravity is gone, I fall backwards,
reversing this hell into a dream.

Weightless I am, But falling makes it seem
Like things are easier
Looking up on a cloud of screams.

Chapter 3:

FARMINGTON, NH
2007

The Last Straw

For fifteen minutes,
The faucet kept running.

Certain rumors build up
inside of me.
I start to wonder if they are true.

Word downtown,
Is that she's booting drugs.
The early nights make sense now.
My head begins to spin.

Disbelief showed itself to me
when I kicked in the door.
Behind it an addict screaming,
"I am your mother!"

It is then that I realize
We are rolling around.
Addiction overcomes parenthood.
I have got to hold myself together.

Anxiety crushes me.
It's getting more difficult to breathe.
Then it hits me. I have to call dad,
And get out of here for good.
I have to help myself.

I'm not Going Down

You want to hurt me?
Go ahead and give me

your best shot.
I'm not going down.
You think I haven't suffered enough,
Or worried why you
are hardly around?
I'm not going down to your level.
That's something I will guarantee.
Just because you refuse to
help yourself,
Doesn't mean you will continue to bring
down me.
Do not try and perceive it
As me judging you for this.
I've tried to convince you
to clean up,
But you love the addiction.
I'm doing the best I can
to get through this,
And I have tried to set you free,
but over and over
you've denied my assistance.
So now I have got to help me.

Chapter 4:

CAPE CANAVERAL, FL
2008

Just Think

Just think,

Of the things you
Could accomplish
If you remember:

That you need to be strong,
And realize it is not
all fun and games.
And you will get hurt,
By the people you love most.

So, be smart.
Take control of the fight.
Accept your responsibilities,
And do what you
Have to do,

To be better than anybody,
And anything that has
Gotten into your way.
And remember to breathe.

My Recovery

I'm right where I want to be,

But I have been through so much.
Now I just look back
on the experience.
Which isn't as tough.

Little by little,
I have gotten back on my feet.
I had to learn to accept my mistakes,
And realized it was myself I had to defeat.

I fought for what I wanted,
And I'm back on track.
I still want mom to grow up,
but addictions hard to attack.

I know if I'm sober,
And I managed just fine.
Then she will smarten up.
It is only a matter of time.

You Can Do It.

It will be hard
To act like the adult,
But you have to think long-term,
And plan your results.

Know what you want.
Do not let the past bring you down.
Remove all of the negative.
It's her fault you are not around.

You have to have strength,
And a future plan.
Don't let the addiction pull you in,
If you want to succeed you can.

So stick your chin in the air,
And do something for you.
You will never get better,
If drugs are all you plan to do.

It feels Good

It feels good to have control
of your life and your dreams.
It feels good to be growing up,
and standing on your own two feet.

It feels good to go through this,
And come out with a smile.
It feels good to accomplish things,
which makes it all worthwhile.

It feels good to do something
with my goals and my life.
It feels good to know
I've made my wrongs right.

It feels good to know
I'm not face flat on the ground.
It feels good to know I can handle
Whatever slaps me around.

It feels good to know
I'm making something of myself.

And it feels good to know
That greatness is all that I've felt.

It feels good to know
That I am responsible
for me & my things.
And it feels good to know
I can handle whatever life brings.

It feels good to know
That life is starting to feel good.
And it feels good to show
Everybody what you said you would.

It feels good to just let go,
And do the best that you can.
It feels good to know
That I did this all on my own.

Scented Memories

A field of dead flowers
With a beautiful scent.
They have all died,
But I smell them occasionally.
The memories do not exist,
But they are still there.
Very well in existence
In the back of my head.
Sitting there like a stubborn attic.
Who refuses to stop
Doing what she is doing.
She pokes at my happiness,
Which makes it painful
To feel any kind of emotion.
I do not see her but she exists.
I can feel her, I know she goes on.
Even though the distance is far,
She is right here
In the back of my head.
Constantly reminding me
That even though
the flowers have died,
The smell remains beautiful.

Just a Phone Call

A different phone number
Every single time she remembers
to pick up the phone and call me.
My expression of depression
Towards mom and her addiction
Remain obvious to me,
And have yet
to hit her where it hurts.
Her expression of carelessness
Remains hidden to her,
And proceeds to
Slap me across the face.
While I continually try in exhaustion
To do anything, and everything I can
To help the situation.
Yes, I talk to her sometimes,
But the phone calls
Will never amount
To how it used to feel,
coming home everyday to her smile.
And I wish she was dead sometimes.
Just so I could say
That she is not here
For a better reason
Than her addiction to drugs.

You have

You have put me through pain,
And made me not want to go on.
You have left me wondering,
Where you are, what you are doing.
You have taken my childhood,
And left me standing all alone.
You have exposed me to drugs,
And what they can do for you.
You have been selfish
in your parenting,
And only think about yourself.
But
You
Have
Taught
Me
So
much.

You have taught me how to deal,
When I feel like never going on.
You have taught me to find my way,
No matter where I may be.
You have taught me to be selfless,

And help whenever I can.
You taught me that drugs ruin lives,
And you taught me firsthand.
You taught me to find motivation,
Through the difficulties in life.
You taught me
almost everything I know,
And have given me the best in you.

But
I
Have
Already
Lost
So
much.

Breathe

Just think.
Stop getting distracted
By the voices convincing you
to ignore the situation.

Remember to breathe.
If you accidentally forget,
The situation could possibly
Take control of you.

You will lose the war,
If you do not remain calm,
And learn to make positive
The negative you are experiencing.

I Am Failing

I cannot blame
The way she thinks on her,
Because she is high.
It is the drugs talking.
She is supposed to know,
Whether she is high or not,
that I am struggling to go on.
Just as she is.
So now I feel as though
I am making up excuses
As to whom deserves the blame
In this difficult situation.
It comes down to only one option.
She is to blame. For being so blind
As to what is going on around her,
Every time she is high.
Losing her children
Might open her eyes.
Not talking to her at all,
Might possibly take her by surprise.
Telling her exactly how I feel,
Just may allow her to realize.
But I have made attempts
At all of these things,
And I have failed desperately.
What am I to do
To clue her into the fact
That she is killing herself?

I will Admit

A blank thought enters my mind
When I concentrate too hard on all of this.

Even though I saw it all firsthand
I will be the first to admit
It's still extremely hard
to understand.

I've done what I can
to get back on track.
It sounds hard but I've gotten through.

Yes, I did the same things as she,
But I was the first to admit it.
She still gets trashed guilt-free.

I still cannot tell
if this is reality or dream.
It is still so much for me to swallow.

But that was exactly what I did.
Why can't she just

admit her problem,
And take care of her kids?

One day it will hit her
like those drugs do.
Then she will realize
what she looks like.

And even though
I hate the things she has done,
I will admit that I love her,
And I wish that she didn't do drugs.

Mom, I know something like this takes
pride,
And I will admit that it is hard,
But I will stand by your side.

Through all of it.
And I have been all along.

Nightmares

We took a walk
Through mom's life today,
And she looked amazing,
And smelled like vanilla oil.

She told me stories
Of how happy she was.
She had gotten back on her feet,
and had a beautiful house.

Mom was back to her old self.
Telling stories and lighting incense.
My thoughts straightened out,
And a feeling of relief took over.

The sky slowly turned black.
Rain penetrated our eyes.
As I tried to escape for cover,
She absorbed the lightning.

I stood there alone and frightened.
Mom did not have a care.
The storm filled her with energy,

But I needed guidance to shelter.
I scream her name
At the top of my lungs.
She appears to be incoherent,
But she stares into my eyes
and laughs apologetically.

I wake up in a sweat
I am freezing,
except my heart is beating
so uncontrollably
I feel as if I was on fire.

I am in a panic,
And I realize
She has no idea
What she is doing to me.

The Beautiful Garden

She was my hero.
Her beauty amazed me.
Her strength was intimidating.

So many rules she had.
I miss them so bad.
As weird as that may sound.

She had a beautiful garden.
The colors reminded me of her.
Pinks, yellows, purples.

She used to comfort me.
She used to sing and dance with me.
She used to smile and talk with me.

She was engagingly beautiful.
The kind that made people jealous.
The beauty you would love to be around.

I remember when she smiled,
Her blue eyes looked like the ocean.
She had the world at her fingertips.

Her garden eventually wilted,
And that smile died.
Right along with her happiness.

When that happened,
A part of me was stolen,
And I had no control over it.

Suddenly she wasn't so strong,
And with strength came beauty.
Everything was gone, vanished.

She slowly lost it.
I miss my hero,
And her beautiful garden
Of pinks, yellows, and purples.

Emotions

There comes a point in time
Where you want to forget all of it,
And give up on trying to help.

Especially when you get
no phone calls,
or letters, or money.

Just to remind you
That even though she
is not physically here,
She is still doing something to help.

There comes a point in time

Where you almost
make yourself believe

That it does not matter anymore,
and to give up on trying to stop it.

Just let fate run its course.

When you have been trying
for 4 years

To make things better
and nothing works.

You know she is going to die high.
So even though you want to give up,
Because your efforts have failed,
You still try everything you can
To help her survive.

You get mad at her
For being so selfish,
Because all you have been doing
Is giving this addiction your all,
And she isn't doing a damn thing.
But while you feel this way,
You also remember that
She is your mother,
regardless of everything.
Doesn't that mean
That she should be the adult
And get herself out of
The situation she has
Gotten herself into?
And you want to do
what she is doing,
So she knows how it feels
To watch somebody she loves
Kill themselves with drugs,
But you can't because
You have to be strong,
Or you will both go down,
And this is what kills you the most.

I've Had Enough

You push me around,
With your incessant lies.
Shove me right into depression.

You ignorant woman.
Smarten up you addict.
I'm sick of your addiction.
Strength used to overcome

Everything for you.
Looking up to you my whole life
Suddenly is such a mistake.

You have pulled
the wool over my eyes
for the last time mother.

I have come to see
The person you really are.
In time I may accept it,
Or I may not.

That all depends on
how much longer
You push me around
Like your play toy,
And convince yourself I am blind
to your problems.

When I have known about them all along.

Since You've Been Away

Try to find a cause in waking up,
So I can forget I haven't seen her.
I need her so badly right now,
But mom needs her needle.

A sense in the day?
A light for the night?
Just hearing her beautiful voice,
Would make everything seem alright.

Every single moment,
The drugs tear her apart.
It may not show in my smile,
But I can feel in painfully in my heart.

And the struggle alone,
Had made me as strong as it can,
And even though heartbroken,
I at least try to understand.

I smile though.
A million times a day,
Because even though she is on her own,
I have faith she will be okay.

The heroin has taken her over,
But still I am on her side.
She is my mother and I love her,
But she only makes me cry.

I have hope for you mom.
Somehow you'll be okay.
Don't ever feel like
You are alone in this,
Because I struggle with you
every single day.

Chapter 5:

WEST DANVILLE, VT
2009

Moving On

We have all moved on,
And have gotten our priorities straightened out,
And mom sulks and she cries,
Because she does not
comprehend why
She is getting nowhere.

Even though she was once heroic,
Her addiction bypasses her maturity,
And somehow she forgets how
To take responsibility
for her own actions.

At the same time
You cannot judge her.
It is almost impossible,
And I say this because
She is so high,
she knows in her mind
That she could never be wrong.

And is positive that she
Is doing the right thing,
and has been all along.

Sweet Sixteen

I almost forgot about everything,
But then mom called
for my birthday.
I am a little bit confused now.
After I haven't heard from her
for weeks.

The phone call is a cover up,
But I want to believe she is not high.
Of course she is.

She has been for the last four years.
Why can't I learn to accept this?
It has been years!

I find myself covering the reality
while writing poems such as these.

I understand my mother is hurt.
I understand she is scared,
But I am not yet mature enough
To accept my mother as an addict,
Rather than the woman
she used to be.

Suffocation

Please help.
I cannot breathe.
Mother, stop
Strangling me
With your drugs.
Cover it up
With your hugs.
I am not falling
For this.
Please do not
Blame me
For this.
I need help.
You're killing me.
I've asked you
To please help.
You are
Strangling me.
I cannot breathe.

Alone

Sometimes,
I feel like I'm sitting
in a corner all alone.
People in the room surround me
With advice on how
to deal with my mother's addiction.
They have never seen or dealt with
anything of the sort.
I ignore what they tell me.
My mother taught me how to do that.
They know nothing.
She knows nothing,
And they still conduct to me
As to how I should handle my life.
I try to scream at them,
But they cannot hear
over themselves.
Why should I listen to all of you?
Just to find myself walking
down the same road.
To the same nothing?

Kidnapping Mom

It is so hard
To know and realize
You're the only one
trying to save her.

Her addiction eats at me.
I need help.
This is too much
for me to handle.

I'm staring at her.
right at this moment.
She pleads at me
to take her home.

I cannot do that.
I brought her here
for a reason.

I cannot let her kill herself.
Finally, she is here.

Determination

If somebody you love
Is addicted to a drug,
You cannot be negative.
You must help them through
What they are going through.
They may refuse your assistance,
But it is only because
They are high.
They don't know any better.
If you do not help them
To get sober,
No matter how much
They beg you not to,
It will only leave them nowhere.
And slowly but surely
They will kill themselves.

Mother

So you
Use drugs?
Sleep good
At night?
No, probably not.

And
Neither do I.
Never have
Ever, well,

Since this happened.
Mother, I love you.
I cannot stand
This any longer.
Help me help you do this.

Take a Hold

I will not buy you drugs,
I have to go to school.
There are things I have to do.

I need to get you sober.
Not feed your pills.
I brought you here for a reason.

I'm not getting high with you.
I graduate this year.
You are supposed to know this!

Why are you bringing me down
when I need you right now.
Times are stressful.

I'm trying to do some good,
But you need a friend,
And I need a mother.

Dear Mom

So here is my advice to you mom.
Isn't that the weirdest thing
You have ever heard me say?
Me giving you advice, yeah right.

But believe it or not,
I know how you feel.
Just because you are wiser,
Does not mean I am blind.

I've seen what it is like
To get sick when you are broke,
And you can only think about one thing.
day in and day out.

I came to see it was pulling me down.
Everything I never amounted to
helped me to recognize my own stupidity.
I didn't want to go through the same thing.

You need to smarten up.
It cannot be that hard for you.
I've seen you deal with worse.
Get up and get over it.

I tried to help you but you went home.
I've said all I can say,
And have done all I can do.
The rest is all up to you.

I Almost

I almost couldn't write this,
Because I almost couldn't find the words.
I almost had her all the way sober,
Because I almost had the courage.

I almost couldn't straighten out,
Because I almost lost all strength.
I almost lost all hope,
Because I slowly gave up faith.

I almost didn't make it,
Because I needed her by my side.
I Could see myself ending up like her,
Because I almost took it in stride.

I almost failed my education,
Because I almost wanted to give up.
And I almost forgot to better myself,
Because I didn't want to grow up.

I almost still worry about it,
Because it's almost like she tries.
I almost want to send her this book,
Because I almost want to see her cry.

I almost want to spend time with her,
But I am tired of making the effort.
I almost never want to care again,
But almost never counts, ever.

I Will Survive

I do not know what to write about,
or rather where to start.

It is just that it feels like so long
That mom and I have been apart.

I have so much fun with her.
We are the same person it appears.
I feel as if a part of her is with me.
which also gives me fears.

The best thing for me to do,
Is to learn from her mistakes,
and to do the right thing in life.
Prevail over the problems I may face.

I know she has the willpower.
The sickness can fuel her ambition,
But when there
is nobody around to help her
It becomes very hard for her to listen.

Sometimes she comes to visit me.
Every now and again unexpected.
It is then she remembers why to get sober,
So for me her problem goes undetected.

I love to see her because I am confident
That she has the strength to get right.
I know my mother better than any,
And she can put up quite a fight.

That is why I never lose my smile,
Or let my faith walk out,
Because I believe one day
She'll know what I'm talking about.

I hope she will get better.
It would be a wonderful thing.
Her addiction is one of the hardest to face,
And I hate to fight off
the pain that it brings.

I took out of this experience
an important lesson.
To learn from your parent's mistakes,
That everybody falls down in their lives.
The outcome all depends
on how you take it.

Stand next to your family
and support them,
Through all of the wrongs and the rights.
So when they fall and cannot get back up,
You stand up for them and you fight.

I Need You Now

Almost in tears
Is where I seem
To find myself
At this moment.

In less than a year
I will be out on my own
With nobody to lean on.
I need you now.

I hear songs and see movies
That bring me back
To the days
of your sobriety.

What am I to do
In times of need,
And frustration
from being away from you?
I need you now.

It Hurts

It hurts when you scream,
And it hurts when you lie.
It hurts when you do not call,
And it hurts to hear you high.

It hurts me that you
do not have a care,
And it hurts when you do not try.
It hurts when I see what
you have become,
And it hurts to break down and cry.

It hurts to think you are an addict,
And it hurts to know this is real.
It hurts that you forget my name,
And it hurts that you don't know how I feel.

It hurts me that you are not sober,
And it hurts when I cannot cope.
It hurts to think that
you could be gone.
And it hurts to know
You are addicted to dope.

Eating My Stress

It always seems as though
The whole world
Is crashing down on me.

Between school,
And my mother,
And trying to plan
What I am going to do
With the rest of my life.

Keeping up is hard.
Especially when
You have no female figure
From whom to ask advice.

You feel like everybody
Is watching you,
Waiting for you
To buckle under the pressure
And fail.

Everything is so jumbled
And you do you best
To keep things organized,
So you do not lose it.

Things such as these
Become so difficult
To have to deal with,
And make you want to
Give up on everything
You plan to achieve.

So I try to find a motivation
To get through.
Until I am old enough
To get out on my own,
And make better choices
Than she did.

I Miss You

Let's get straight to the point.
I miss you and cannot wait
For the day that you get right.
Maybe when you are clean
We can move in together
Since I will be on my own.

Let's be completely truthful.
I am scared and cannot think
of my life without you alive.
So when you decide
To take me up on my offer,
I'll do my best
To make sure you survive.

My Solution

It is tonight that I have made
A very vital decision that will
Stay with me for the rest of my life
and possibly longer.

I have decided
To let all of my judgments
And interpretations go
When it comes to
my mother's addiction.

I do plan to forget about
The struggle within the last
Five years of doing this.
I just plan to become positive.

Being optimistic about something
Like this addiction is difficult
For me to do after everything
It continues to put me through.

I am no longer going to refer to
my mother's addiction as an addiction.
I am going to tell people she is not here,
because she simply has a problem.

This will be my first step
To making this ordeal positive,
And will be followed
by many other arduous steps.

Upon completing optimism,
I intend to convince myself
That there have been beautiful lessons
That have stemmed from this problem.

I will not push her away while
I think about the pain her problem
has put me through repeatedly.
I will surround her with happiness.

I will stand my ground, and
Fight for her survival, and
Will be positive
every step of the way.

The first reason being to fix
My mother's problem,
And indirectly help her survive.
while she does the same for me.

Part 3:

AFTER THE ADDICTION Present Day 2010

*“The weird part is I finally did it. I know
if I want to stay clean I have to be away.”*

-my mother

Relief

“Feels good to be clean,” she says.

And I tell her that I know.

“I just have to stay motivated,” she says.

And I tell her that’s the way to go.

“I have a lot more money,” she says.

And I tell her that’s good.

“I’m doing this for both of us,” she continues.

And I tell her that she should.

“It was so hard to do alone!” she cries.

And I tell her I understand.

“I regret the things I’ve done!” she cries.

And I tell her to try as hard as she can.

“I am so sorry for everything,” she screams.

And I tell her I’m sorry too.

“Just help me through the rest?” she asks.

And I say it’s all up to you.

She end the conversation with a sweet,

“I love you Jessie.”

And I smile and say,

“I love you too, but it’s still not over yet.”

How Far We Have Come

Oh, how I love your voice
Even more than the feeling
I get when I hear it.
I love when you
Sound healthy and beautiful,
And I am confronted with
laughter instead of tears.
A part of me knew
You had the strength to pull through.

You always told me that
If I could get myself in,
I could get myself out.
I'm glad you took
Your own advice and
did the right thing.
For yourself but
especially for your children.

It is good to smile
When I hear your voice,
Instead of crying when

We hang up the phone.

It is good to know
That if I need advice
Or anything that you
Were incapable of giving me
In the last five years,
I can count on you for it.

This experience
Will be with me
for the rest of my life.

Whenever I decide
To look back on it all
You will be right next to me
And I will smile and say,
“Mom I am so glad you are here.
I do not know where I would be
without you.”

Difficult Situations

We all face obstacles in our lives
one way or the other.
The important part
Of the problems we may face
Is to learn from what
They put us through
And to try and remember
To not make the same mistakes
Later down the road.
Because in the end
It is only yourself you must face
We are all forced to experience
The more difficult situations of life
In order to discover who we are
By the process in which
We deal with things such as these
So it is important to stay strong
And stay motivated to be better
Through any obstacle you face
Because in the end
It is only yourself
You will disappoint.

Thank You Mom

As I wrote this story
I learned how to cope
With my mothers problems,
And why they have kept her away from me.

And as I wrote this story
My mother gave up drugs.
I knew she could do it.
And she did.

Thank you mom.
You have taught me
So many things
Through your decisions.
Good or bad.

And thank you again
For taking my advice
and finally getting sober.
You have saved my life.

Ever After

After the addiction,
If there even is an after,
All you are left with
is horrible memories.

It was helpful to me
To remember not to
Forget anything that happened
as a result of the addiction.

The memories can be
An important lesson
Of what not to do
And what choices you should avoid.

It was essential for me
To know that this experience
Was worthwhile for many reasons

One of those being simply that
now I know how to present myself
When the whole world
Has come crashing down on me.

On a Last Note....

I am in no way, shape, or form
An expert on drug addiction,
But I am somebody who has been there before.
And I feel as though I am doing my part
When I let you know
The lessons you should keep with you.....

I imagine that many people
Going through an addiction
Have the same question in repetition.
“Why does the drug become more important
than yourself, your family, your kids?”
It is not because the user
does not care.
It is because they are just
too high to realize that they do.
Or this may have just been the case
during my experience.
It must be hard
To think about anything else
When the only thing
You are doing day in and day out
is getting high on drugs.
You try it and discover
How hard it is to care about something that
Doesn't make you feel nearly as free
As those drugs do.
Hopefully one day
You can also understand
That everybody needs help.
You have to learn how

to pick yourself up and keep going
No matter how hard things become.
There were times when I wanted to die.
Just to release myself from all of the pain.
There were times where I resorted
To the same things
that were affecting my mother.
I made a lot of wrong choices
That sent me down difficult roads
That I could have avoided,
but chose not to.
I rebelled against everything.
school, family, friends, even myself.
I would lock myself in my room
and would also refuse to eat.
I failed my first two years of school
and was arrested for the first time.
I didn't know how to deal with
My mother's problem.
I was in the midst of becoming a young lady
And everything hit me all at once.
There were times
Where I told my mother I hated her.
I blamed her for everything and anything I could.
Things just became worse for me.
I remember abandoning my dream
To some day go to college.
I felt like my whole life
was coming down on me.
I treated people horribly and
Ruined most of the relationships
I had my whole life.
There are still people who do not talk to me.
People who tried to help me
And I pushed them away
Because I hated the thought
of their sympathy.

It was embarrassing to me.
I could not cope.
I didn't even know how to
Find a way to deal
with all of the chaos.
However,
There was a day when all of that changed.
The evening that I actually caught
My mother injecting pills
Was the night I woke up.
Even though I do not remember
Most of things that were said that night
There were a few choice words I recall.
I distinctly remember getting blamed
For never being there.
For never supporting her.
For never understanding
What she had gone through.
I was so confused and angry and upset
And couldn't understand why
She had been so blind to my efforts.
I was the one who watched the abuse.
I was the person who lived in a hotel room,
and moved from house to house, year by year.
I was the one who slept next to her,
and comforted her
after the death of her parents,
I was the one who cooked dinner
for Susan, David and I
when she couldn't find the strength to.
I was the one who didn't have a choice
watching my mother get abused
Or being homeless and not knowing
If my mother was going to
come home that night.
I was trying to help the person
Who gave me life.

The woman who was going to
Be there to support me
through the struggles of adulthood.
just as I had done for her.

My mother made some horrible choices
during my childhood and into my maturity.
Some of which I will never forgive her for.

Including the loss of my childhood.

But others were lessons.

Lessons of courage and bravery,
and learning how to do the right thing.

So the bottom line is,

Find something to live for.

That seems to be what

Every person who cannot

Overcomes struggle Forgets to do.

They forget to remember that

There is a reason for their existence.

You just have to say to yourself,

“You know what? I am better than this.

I am strong enough and brave enough

To defeat any struggle you throw at me.

I am going somewhere with this life of mine

So go ahead and try to hit me with your best shot because I
can survive.

I know I can

Because I believe in myself.”

Dedicated to my mother
Susan Smith



Mom,

I can only imagine the emotions you will have gone through after reading everything I have taken so long to write. I want you to know that it was not my intention to upset you or to bring you down, but just to open your eyes to the certain events that have affected me the most. It was just

as hard for me to write about all of these experiences, as it was for you to read about them.

Up until five years ago, you were the best mother a child could ask for. There was never a time during my childhood that I did not stand next to you and support you just as you did for me. I was there through the good and the bad. Not a day goes by that I do not think back to the days when you were here. I assure you that there were just as many good memories as there were bad and I remember them all. I dedicate Mother, Where Art Thou? to you for a few reasons. The first reason being that you were the inspiration of this book,


I also dedicate this book to you because you were the person who encouraged me to write about my feelings and you were also the person who had the patience to sit and read about all of things I wrote about as a young child.

I am confident that you will understand my intentions behind exposing some of the events that I did during the process of writing this book. I am also confident that what I have opened up about will somehow open your eyes to certain aspects of our relationship that you have chosen to neglect over the past five years.

I know you have currently been trying to get back on your feet through your sobriety. I

cannot tell you how proud I am of you. You have been through so many hard times which encouraged you to walk yourself down the wrong path. Now you have found your way. For now, I can only take your word for it, but in time I will see. I will see that you are just as strong as I always thought you to be. You have been the key influence in my life.

So here's to you mom. Perhaps someday I will see you again. When I do I look forward to listening to everything you have gone through in an effort for sobriety. I love you, and I miss you. Nobody could ever replace you or could teach me the lessons that you have. Through all of the experiences good or bad, through all of the memories happy and sad, you have been there. You are my mother, and also my hero.



“ If you can get yourself in, you can get yourself out.”
-Susan Smith

This is a book about the struggles I went through as a result of my mother’s drug addiction. Each individual poem signified an important time during my life. The events that I have opened up about are of the hardest experiences I have ever been through. My goal in writing this story was to let teenagers know that you do not have to let hardships in life, such as family addiction, bring you down. There are other roads you can take in order to succeed and in order to be better than the experience that made you want to give up on trying. I hope my story will encourage other young adults to make the right choices when faced with difficult situations. After all that I have been through, I am stronger and more courageous than I ever have been. I hope that this story serves as a positive example to others who are confused and have not yet learned to cope with addiction in their families.

If I can do it, anybody can.