Inner Strength - A "Peace" of Nature – by Michelle Lynn Schmitt

Imagine…bright green grass, rays of sunshine coming through the trees wrapped by the clear blue sky, a perfect shadow of a leaf casted on a log, two squirrels playfully chasing each other, sweet chirping of little birds, perfectly placed bird nests nestled high in the trees, bright yellow flowers saying hello and goodbye at the end of the path, dandelions waiting for their seeds to be spread by the breath of gentle wind, and a great white heron proudly taking command of the nature preserve.

This was the scene at my dad's memorial garden in Dallas just outside UT Southwestern Medical Center.

In my last article I mentioned that I know grief well. Writing poetry has been a healthy outlet for me to process grief. I always end my poems with a sense of hope and encouragement. Writing poetry brings my right brain and left brain together which provides me calmness and peace.

Grief

You don't have a face.

There's no description that is right or wrong.

You can change at any time.

No one can dictate what you look like, where you go, or what you do.

Freedom like this is a blessing!

Live on, grief, for as long as you want or need to.

Emotions

Roller coaster

slowing down

Loud on the other side

Feeling but not consuming

Loving, accepting

Calming smile

Peace within

I love you forever!

Amen

I have learned that allowing oneself to experience grieving moments when they happen, your heart and mind are freer to enjoy life's next moment.

The most helpful messages I have received about grief include:

There is no timeline on grief. If you've known the one you lost for 30 years, it may take you 30 years. – Chaplain at UT Southwestern Dallas

Triggers can come from anywhere at the most unexpected times.

- *It's Ok You're Not Okay*

I was so close to my dad, that I dismissed the pain of loss for over 10 years. I missed him every day. It wasn't until the anniversary of his death last April that I couldn't help but experience the pain. It's like I had no control over what I was feeling. So, I let myself feel it. Once I did, it was like a switch had been turned off and I could move forward with grieving in different ways that were more manageable.

One's identity is shaped by loss, which is the theme of this next poem.

Identity

Mold of clay

That never dries

Shaped like no one else

Molds and bends from pressures of the world

Created special by God

From beginning to end

So, about that beautiful garden…I took one of the yellow flowers back to my boys, for they give me flowers from time to time.

My dad gave me a gift of a "peace" of nature.