

All I Remember

When my father spoke to me, he always began the conversation with "Have I told you yet today how much I adore you?" The expression of love was reciprocated and, in his later years, as his life began to visibly ebb¹⁾, we grew even closer. . .

At 82 he was ready to die, and I was ready to let him go so that his suffering would end. We laughed and cried and held hands and told each other of our love and agreed that it was time. I said, "Dad, after you have gone I want a sign from you that you are fine." He laughed at the absurdity of that; Dad didn't believe in reincarnation²⁾. I wasn't positive I did either, but I had had many experiences that convinced me I could get some signal "from the other side".

My father and I were so deeply connected I felt his heart attack in my chest at the moment he died. Later I mourned that the hospital, in their sterile³⁾ wisdom, had not let me hold his hand as he had slipped away.

Day after day I prayed to hear from him, but nothing happened; night after night I asked for a dream before I fell asleep. And yet four long months passed and I heard and felt nothing but grief at his loss. Mother had died five years because of Alzheimer's disease, and, though I had grown daughters of my own, I felt like a lost child.

One day, while I was lying on a massage table in a dark quiet room waiting for my appointment, a wave of longing for my father swept over me, and I began to wonder if I had been too demanding in asking for a sign from him. I noticed that my mind was in a hyper-acute⁴⁾ state. I experienced an unfamiliar clarity in which I could have added long columns of figures in my head. I checked to make sure I was awake and not dreaming, and I saw that I was as far removed from a dreamy state as one could possibly be. Each thought I had was like a drop of water disturbing a still pond, and I marvelled⁵⁾ at the peacefulness of each passing moment. Then I thought, "I have been trying to control the messages from the other side; I will stop that now. "

Suddenly my mother's face appeared—my mother, as she had been before Alzheimer's disease stripped her of her mind, her humanity and 50 pounds. Her magnificent silver hair crowned her sweet face. She was so real and so close I felt I could reach out and touch her. She looked as she had a dozen years ago, before the disease had begun. I even smelled the fragrance of Joy, her favourite perfume. She seemed to be waiting and did not speak. I wondered how it could happen that I was thinking of my father and my mother appeared, and I felt a little guilty that I had not asked for her as well.

I said, "Oh, mother, I am so sorry that you had to suffer with that horrible disease." She tipped her head slightly to one side, as though to acknowledge what I had said about her suffering. Then she smiled—a beautiful smile—and said very distinctly, "but all I remember is love." and she disappeared.

I began to shiver in a room suddenly gone cold, and I knew in my bones that the love we give and receive is all that matters and all that is remembered. Suffering disappears; love remains. Her words are the most important I have ever heard, and that moment is forever engraved on my heart. I have not yet seen or heard from my father, but I have no doubts that someday, when I least expect it, he will appear and say, "Have I told you yet

today that I love you? ”

我所记得的

当我父亲跟我说话时，他总是这样开口：“我今天告没告诉你我是多么爱你？”他这种爱的表达得到了回报；在他晚年，当他的健康日渐衰退时，我们更加亲密了……

父亲 82 岁那年，生命垂危，将撒手人寰，我已做好准备，这样他的痛苦能够终止。我们开心地笑，我们痛苦地哭，我们牵着彼此的手，我们告诉彼此是多么地相爱，我们坦然面对这分手的时候。我说，“爸爸，您去后我要您给我个信号，告诉我您一切都好。”爸爸对这荒唐的想法哈哈大笑；他不相信来世转生。不过，我也不能说我就相信，但我有很多经历让我确信我可以从“那个世界”得到一些信号。

父亲和我是如此血肉相连，以至他死的那一刻，我胸中也感到他的心力衰竭。后来我很悲哀：医务人员为防传染，父亲悄然离世时，没让我握着他的手。

日复一日我祈祷能够收到他的信息，但什么也没有发生；夜复一夜在睡前我祈求能做一个梦。但漫长的 4 个月过去了，我什么也没有收到，什么也没有感觉到，积在心头的只是他逝去带给我的悲伤。母亲因患早老性痴呆病去世已 5 年了，尽管我已有了自己的成年女儿，但此时我就像一个没着没落的孩子。

一天，我躺在按摩台上等待按摩师，房间光线昏暗，寂静无声，对父亲的思念突然涌上心头，我开始问自己：是否过于执著非要寻得父亲的一个信号不可？我发现自己的大脑处于一种高度敏锐状态，有着少有的清晰，完全可以把一长串数字加起来。我想确信自己是清醒的，没有在做梦，结果发现自己着实清醒，根本不是在睡梦中。我脑中出现的每一念头就如同一滴水打扰一潭静水，我惊奇这逝去的每一瞬间是如此宁静平和。这时我想，“我一直在试图控制来自那个世界的信息；此时此刻我要停止这样做。”

忽然，我母亲的面庞出现了——是我的母亲，是我那位在早老性痴呆病夺去她的理智、夺去她的人的特性、夺去她 50 磅身躯之前的母亲。她那美丽的银发像一顶皇冠戴在头上，辉映出她那甜美的面容。她是如此的真实，离我如此的近，我觉得伸手能触摸到她。她看来就如同十几年前病魔尚未缠身时那样。我甚至闻到了“快乐”的香味，那是她最喜欢的香水。她似乎在等待着，什么也不说。我不明白为什么我在想父亲的时候母亲会出现，我有些内疚，因为我并没有像想见父亲那样想见母亲。

我说，“哦，母亲，您遭受那样可怕疾病的痛苦我是多么地难过。”她稍稍侧了一下头，似乎默认我所提及的她的痛苦。然后她露出了微笑——笑得是那么的美——并清清楚楚地说，“但我所记得的只是爱。”说完，她就消失了。

房间的气温骤然下降，我不禁打起了冷战。我从骨子里知道只有我们给予和得到的爱最为重要，也会被记得。痛苦消失；爱尤在。母亲的话是我听过的最为重要的话，而那一刻也永远铭刻在我心上。

我还是没能看到我父亲或收到我父亲的什么信息，但我坚信有那么一天，在我最意想不到的时候，他会出现并对我说，“我今天告没告诉你我爱你？”

NOTE 注释：

ebb [eb] vi. 消退，衰退

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reincarnation [ri:ɪnkɑ:'neɪʃ(ə)n] n. 再投胎，化身，再生

sterile ['sterail] adj. 贫脊的，衰竭的

hyper-acute [haip ə'kju:t] 高度敏锐的

marvel ['mɑ:vəl] v. 大为惊异，觉得惊奇