

I Remember
By Michele Venne

I remember my heart beating fast the first time I met her, my love's mother.

I remember hoping that she would like me, hoping that being a teacher and a woman would be enough to get me in the door, and make up for my young age.

I remember offering to help with the meal, only to be told that "everything is fine" as she went down the list of all that was done and what she herself had left to do.

I remember the first time, the only time, I was shown a family photo album, sitting in the living room, perched on the edge of the sofa cushions, trying to keep names and family ties in some order in my mind, while attempting to come up with questions to ask about people I never met, and would never know.

I remember the motor home stationed next to the house, and that eating a meal in there was like camping, while listening to the zydeco music of New Orleans, or the soulful, sometimes quick licks from Harmonica Bob and Blindman Pete.

I remember Spring Training games in Phoenix and waiting in line for the one thing that really makes the game-the All-American hot dog.

I remember moving in, and her comments on the few material possessions that I had, and her suggestion, "Why don't you add your teaspoons to Pete's silverware drawer-he needs more."

I remember Thanksgivings of smoked, barbequed, and baked turkeys, the last one in Phoenix when there weren't enough serving spoons, but tablespoons would work, and that she had bigger, Thanksgiving-style napkins in the motor home.

I remember a 75th birthday party when my offer of help was in the way because I picked up plates before dessert was served, but that other family members told me it was okay, my frayed nerves at the social faux pax, soothed.

I remember Happy Hours around the pool in Phoenix, with a never ending relish tray of carrots, black olives, mixed nuts, and pretzels.

I remember her white Mexican dress, richly embroidered with multiple colors that was a souvenir from Mulege.

I remember her laughing, teasing, dancing, and love of music, family, and life.

She Remembers

She remembers the town of her childhood, her siblings, and parents her teachers and neighbors, for they shaped her.

She remembers knowing the first time she saw him, that their love would endure.

She remembers missing him when the military called him to duty.

She remembers every detail of the day they were joined in front of family, friends, and God.

She remembers the cross-country journey, over mountains and through valleys, across the plains, that would take her to a new life.

She remembers her fellow teachers and each of the students who were touched by her kindness.

She remembers the pregnancy and birth of each of her five special, incredible, one-of-a-kind children.

She remembers the ball games, the parties, the family vacations, the trip to the Motherland, and is grateful to have been part of these beautiful experiences.

She remembers the smell of paint on canvas, of glue on paper, of wet clay in her hands, the colors she draped on her body.

She remembers the achievements of her husband, children and grandchildren, and is proud to call them her family.

She remembers time growing small, and being surrounded by love.

She remembers letting go of her physical body and being accepted into the light and presence of the Divine.