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Ramblings

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Ramblings

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"429 Orange Street is the first home i can remember... don't know where i lived before that...the crimson red walls in the living room and the artwork one of us etched on the wall... don't know if it was my brother, my sister, or me... read a book that said the youngest child in a family doesn't remember very clearly because he has learned to rely on the memories of others, those who are older and thus possess authority where his memory conflicts with theirs, its discarded as having little worth he believes his memory is more accurately described as a rag-bin or shall we say "quilt" of other's memories, overlapping testimonies of what happened before he was born, mixed in with what happened after his birth, including him"

Cover Page Footnote

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JOAN SIMEONE

RAMBLINGS

429 Orange Street is the first home i can remember
don't know where i lived before that
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learned to rely on the memories of others,
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happened before he was born, mixed in with what happened after his birth, including him

i'm trying to remember pieces of my quilt now
will i ever be able to or will there be so many unanswerable questions
and when i go away
who will be left to worry?
there was that nun in 1st grade making fun of my short haircut
said i looked like a boy and the whole class laughed
it occurs to me now i was a mere audience for her and, of course, that damn nun probably had a
pixie haircut too under that flying *nun habit* that was her costume back then
not wanting to go to school anymore
my mom locked the door so i wouldn't run back home
my sister and her friend were made to walk me
i got there
being in the car with my dad as the radio announcer said Marilyn Monroe was dead
who was this lady, i asked?
think the year was 1962 but i don't know where we were we going
if he was still here i wish we could go for that ride again...there's so many things i
still need to ask and question of him
hated going to the corner store for cigarettes for mom
why didn't i tell her back then...? she's been gone now from lung cancer since '89 and of course
it is too late for us all so much has happened since she's been gone
dad had a heart attack one day at work
he never came home he was 48 and my mom 39 ...three small children were left behind
my three children never knew him...is it possible to explain or describe a person who doesn't
exist?
moved to Geneva because mom didn't drive
it was her friend convincing her it was a nice quiet town for those small children left behind
one day at school a girl approached me on the playground at lunch said, "don't feel bad about
your funny last name" see, she said, "my name is Debbie Queer,"
isn't that queer?
Queer changed to Quinn so people wouldn't think she was Queer
now Debbie Quinn is the mayor of Half Moon Bay, California, isn't it queer?

and my first kiss at West Street playground
his name was Louie and his father had a funeral home
there was also that man in the old red car
walked a dozen paces and then ran wondering where to go - get the license plate number and tuck
it away
detectives came over our house and told my mom he had been caught
no longer be roaming exposing that thing
in that old red car
married with children of his own
the men in blue suits said he was glad he had been caught
those vacations at the Edgewood Resort in Alexandria Bay
trailways bus for us because mom never did learn how to drive those three small children were
all she had
cheerleading in 8th grade friends all made the squad
not me forgot how much this really bothered me
came back to mind when Sara, my daughter, tried for cheerleading in 9th grade
made varsity squad and cheered for all four years...go Sara, do everything imaginable, my heart
leaps for you
freshman year dating a senior all the senior boys dated the freshmen girls that year
oh how the senior girls hated us that year
'69 sophomore year had a crush on a certain junior boy broke his leg sliding into home plate
i sent him a get-well card signed in full instead of just Joan
would he wonder who i was?
he came back to school and hobbled over,
shook his head slightly and shyly said thanks. our eyes never left each other's until after a while
everyone had left the hall
my very first best friend then and still today ...a lifelong contract?
remember my fake red leather coat
a senior in high school we all traveled to Washington for Tom's graduation
as we slept that night someone came into hotel room stole Mom's money and my red leather coat
who gave that person a license to watch as we slept soundly? eerie to think someone could do
this the rest of that trip, i kept looking for my coat
first job right after high school at the big yellow box
those men would whistle when i walked out to the plant
back to the thoughts of the old red car
a certain day one of them called me over and said, "it's when we stop whistling you should be
concerned" i knew what he meant and wanted to tell him but you don't understand
that old red car
one day someone said, heh let's run for a marathon
four months of training and
off went the eight Kodak woman to run their 26.2 miles in Ottawa
Oh the Ottawa Express:
there was Cisilyn the Jamaican
Annie the nurse
Lori who became a jehovah witness
Margie the consultant
Janice the mailroom woman
Korleen the divorcee
forever dieting Gretchen

and the 28-year-old childless me,
pasta, beer, 26.2 and cheers
celebrations all night
next morning painful for all
feeling like Mack trucks
had run over us all
all a blur those labor pains came and went

how blessed that junior boy and me
together so long, then wed for eight years,

and finally three small children in 22 months
was walking the path on my usual drain the dog walk
noticed Richard's garden had not bloomed this summer
all tall yellow and brownish weeds as if it had been under some sort of spell
could the death of his dad this summer
caught him in a tidal wave of grief
could i have escaped that tidal wave?
was i too young when this happened to me?
and also, what about that brother and sister left behind?
life has to have purpose and I
know there are more experiences than you would think there are no words
this much I know is true
but
i need to tuck away this quilt and return
again at another time in my life.