

An Impossible Existence

I believe in the impossible. The impossible path of a twelve year old little girl who is told she is sick. The impossibly tireless love of a mother turned caregiver. The impossible number of coincidences it took to keep a body afloat. The impossibility of my presence in this life.

I can remember the June day I lost my second liver. I remember my mother speeding through traffic. I was curled in the fetal position, in a futile attempt to ease the pain, clawing at my face and shirt, moaning to please let me die so I don't have to feel the pain. Over and over the words "I can't do this again" spilled from my trembling lips. I remember her arms scooping me into a wheelchair and bringing me to the fourteenth floor. I remember the faces- the worried looks of nurses and doctors who'd known me for years, who considered me their success story. I remember catching some of the nurses' eyes, seeing the tears well up and spill over soft eyelashes just as they turned to duck from the room.

I lived, dying, for the next six months in room 1427- the shelves lined with macrobiotic, organic, food; the medicine cabinet scattered with my toilet articles; my fears, pain and hopes spilled in black ink onto the pages of my journals, stacked in drawers at my bedside. There were lonely, terrified nights when I watched trashy television to numb my mind, keep from breaking down; there was the day I threw up buckets of blood; the daily procedures; the poisonous antibiotics that rendered me paralyzed, ate my nerves and stole my trademark long, straight, hair. My mother coaxed me into one more bite of applesauce, fifteen minutes out of bed and in the chair. She washed my hair, shaved my legs, and rubbed lotion into my thirsty skin. There was the day I removed my gown and stood in front of the mirror to record my nude body on black

and white film: edges of cut flesh held together with staples, a Foley catheter, a blood drainage tube with grenade shaped bag, bile tubes held into my side with a few rudimentary stitches. There were central lines, IVs, holes and bruises from angiograms and transjugular procedures.

I remember the day, the impossible day, when the nurses walked into my room with smiles and balloons to tell me I would receive my third liver. The impossibility of being transplanted the day my great grandmother died and then waking from a post surgical coma on my birthday, a woman reborn.

Today I found out that the blood flow to my liver has diminished, and I haven't found the courage to tell my mother. I am terrified that I will see my terror reflected in her eyes. Now I'm reminded that I will again need for the impossible to be possible, and through the sheer impossibility of my existence tonight,

I believe with all of my heart that it is.