

Him

Written on July 8th, 2018 on the 17th year of his yahrzeit

My mom told me once that my brother loved listening to the Talking Heads. It seemed the overgrown shoulder padded suit with a boyish looking man inside spoke to him as the outsider he was. My brother was a kind, empathetic and passionate person; yet he dabbled, dangerously, in being a social chameleon. People liked him, but he appeared to fit in too much. Depending on who he was around, he morphed into what they thought he should be and he seemed to lose himself; like a young arm trying to find its' way into the shell of a structured shoulder. After a while, there was no time to think about what he had done so the world moved and he continued to float above it.

In one of the Talking Heads' most famous songs "Once in a Lifetime" the great David Byrne repeated the words '*same as it ever was*'; an increasingly important slogan for a young girl who had just lost her brother. I feared that this mantra running through my brothers head '*same as it ever was, same as it ever was*' caused him to not to look forward towards the future that was sure to come. He just let the days go

by, asking *'what have I done?'* And he may have asked himself from time to time, *'how did I get here?'*

When I think back, I suppose the one thing I remember the most is the scream. The absolute guttural outcry that my mother let out when my father told her Josh had died. I remember that morning very well; it was a Sunday. Josh was getting out of rehab, it was visitation day and he was able to leave and come see us at our apartment. I was young, only 7 years old, and I was looking forward to being able to see my brother. I was watching my morning programs and I recall thinking that he was very late. Yet, Barney continued to sing "I love you, you love me, we're a happy family" and my mother went on baking, she made chocolate chip scones when he would visit. I suppose a fiction writer would say it was gloomy and cloudy out that morning, however it was particularly sunny that day and the whole house smelled of baked goods. The air was still; it was the calm before the storm. Even me, as a little girl, didn't quite believe Barney's words as he sang.

After a seemingly long wait, I heard a knock on the door. My father ran out of his dirty office, otherwise known as the dining room table, and went to the front door to answer it. A strange man, unknown to me, was there looking too official for a weekend morning. The man motioned to

my father to go outside with him, he went with the man. After only a few short minutes, my dad rushed back into the house and flew through the living room. His destination? My mother in the kitchen. After a short lifetime of waiting; of wanting more, and yearning for things to be different, it had happened; Josh had died; gone in a world of missing persons. That scream woke me from my childhood daydreams; and I then realized I would be forever among the broken. My mother ran into the living room where I was sitting on the rugged flowery couch and threw herself on the ground; she kicked, yelled, and sobbed as if to say “take me”. Have you ever seen someone’s heart break in front of you? I have, and it only happens once in a lifetime. My father knelt down to my level and said “Jordie, Josh has died.” In such tragedy, my father was honest to me for the first and last time that day.

I can’t say I have always been happy. It’s troublesome for me as I have been through so many incredible horrors in my years. I have spent most of my short span of a lifetime angry, trying to make sense of his death; to keep going. But I will tell you why I have made it this far. Sometimes there are days when I am walking, and the sun is shining, and suddenly I will smell rain. The funny thing being I will look around at the dry desert I live in, the perfectly still sky of Arizona, and there are no

clouds in sight and I can't help but break out laughing. The irony of the smell right on the tip of my nose, and the reality of hot air around me. The irony of the sunny morning we found out he had died; the irony of the boyish man in the fatherly suit. As people say, things aren't always what they seem, as is the story of my time. Sometimes you just have to let the days go by and let the water hold you down.

David Byrne might be right, maybe the world is the '*same as it ever was*' but I disagree. I have told many sad stories, all of them doused in absolute truth as if part of a movie script. My life has not been flawless, in fact, far from it. However when I think of Josh, he and his life have brought such great happiness into mine. He was different, miles away from sameness. I have loved my less-than-ideal life and every moment with and without him. Let it be known on this night, July 8th, 2018, I celebrated life and all it entails, the full and the empty. And if I convey anything at all, let me tell you, it brings me such joy to say '*and he was.*'