

I GREW UP TO BE THE WOMAN
I Always Wanted to Be

October 29, 2013

I tripped my way through life faltering
failing
succeeding
hurting!

I learned how to be
how to serve
how to survive

I endured multiple losses
Granddad and Grandma Horner
Granddad and Grandma Dickerson
Dad
Lela
Linda
Candy
Kathi
Uncle Hughie
Reu
Helen
Uncle Tanky

I knew someday Mom would
be added to this list
but not now!
I wasn't ready!

Her progression to death's door
moved quickly.

I garnered all my skills
my abilities
my wisdom
and took control

took care of her.

I watched my actions
in the midst of insane chaos
aware that I took the lead
in her care.

For two months,
I was sane
peaceful
powerful
focused
in the midst of the unknown
and mayhem.

Then one night,
I crumbled
on the dark drive home.

During these two months,
Lin, Bub, and I conferred
each night
long distance
my brother lives in northern California
planned together
supported each other

That overwhelming night I hit a wall;
I knew I needed more.
Bub offered to come and help.
I cried, "Yes, come! I need you."

We shared Mom's last days—
her two loving children!
Surrounding her with
our love
attention
hugs and kisses

sweet words
laughter
memories

That last fateful day,
Mom stared at the ceiling.
She wailed.
Mom couldn't answer a question.
She wailed.
Mom didn't seem in pain,
just vacant
moving on to another world!

Bub and I prayed
—with tears!—
release for her
our mom
surrender
let go!

At the end, Bub was on one side of her bed
me on the other!
Other family members and hospital staff
joined us.
She left us
and this world,
wrapped in our love.

Most of the funeral plans fell on my
shoulders
as organizer,
but we collaborated,
ideas from many family members
and friends.
We gave Mom an "Elva Horner"
send off!

I had a solid knowing,

a deep satisfaction with myself
and how I handled her death.

I grew up to be
the woman I always
wanted to be
at fifty-nine years old!

I stayed
I persevered
I collaborated
I sobbed
I screamed!

At a time I desperately needed it,
God's grace abounded.

I gave all that I had
to the woman
who gave me
life!

I realized
that my mission
in this life
was complete!

All my other successes
faded into obscurity!
All my joys, my triumphs
meant nothing
were hollow!
I knew that I had succeeded
finally by how I handled
my Mom's life and death!

I truly grew up to be the woman I always wanted to be—
in her passing,

my mom showed me that truth.

Larada Horner-Miller, *A Time to Grow Up: A Daughter's Grief Memoir*, (2017): 115-119.