

Mother without her sons.

"Motherhood: All love begins and ends there."

Robert Browning

I never would have thought that I could look at a statement like the one at the top of this page and have it relate to me. As I look at the letters I can see how they have been placed wrong. I want to fix this mistake, and it could be so easy, just a few clicks of the mouse. If I could just take out the "OUT" then I could have the word "WITH". The "with" is so very different than the "Out". Catastrophic on one hand, and a blessing on the other. It is the difference between starving and thriving, hurting and happy, and healthy and dying. Two or three letters can change everything.

Here I am looking at this new life I have been trying so hard to build. I like the feel of myself as I have gained some confidence and realized some of my strengths. I pray it is not all an illusion, and I wonder if I have the inner core to survive many more storms. I sometimes wander through my day without being able to focus on what I need or want. This is when I make mistakes, and I sometimes slide backwards too far. Am I really capable of finding my way? Can I possibly navigate through the maze of obstacles placed before me by the "out"?

It's raining today. It is one of those all day soakers where the sky refuses to let the sun break through even for a sneak peak. I feel confined in the rain, and the dark clouds are heavy on my shoulders. I can't run from the rain any more than I can run from the fear that has become part of my fingerprint. Fear is a

piece of my existence that I have had to learn to cohabit with. I look at how I have tried to fight this demon, and I often wonder if I should have even tried. The sun will most likely come out tomorrow, and it is inevitable that it will come again one day soon. Will the sun take the fear and banish it from my soul?

Probably not.

Will my sons understand my intentions when the sun comes out? Will my heart have healed while the sun heats the afternoon sky? Will I suddenly become the one who has custody of the "with" on a beautiful warm spring day?

No, probably not.

The pain of losing my sons will never cease and it will never change. I may learn to live with it in a more productive manner, but the potency of the hurt will always own a piece of my soul.

The hope that this time will pass is the thing that makes my eyes flutter open in the mornings and nips at my heels to keep my feet moving throughout the day.

Today it is mother's day and today it is raining. Today the pain is more intense than usual and today I hurt in every fiber and molecule. Today I wish I was one of the ones who have been blessed with the "with".

I am angry that I had my "with" stolen right out from under me. I am angry that society allowed this to happen without asking me first. I am angry that I let this happen in front of my eyes. I am angry that my will to survive was

not enough. I am angry at myself for assuming that my unconditional love for others ran on a parallel plane.

I blame myself for not having the right words when they would have mattered. I blame myself for the lack of courage, confidence, and strength to demand that others see and hear me during the critical time of judgments... I blame myself for being held hostage by my fears. I blame myself.

The rain is pouring on the fresh flowers that I have just planted on the porch. Each petal reacts differently to the weight of the rain. Some petals have the foundation to hold strong despite the amount of rain, while others lose their form with only a few drops. Yet they all raise their faces to the sun when it is time for it to come out again.

I thought that I had reached my limit of tears not that long ago. I was certain that I would never recover my shape and form. Yet, I did wake up every day, I did form new thoughts and ideas, and I did learn to try again. I became overconfident in my assumption that the storms had passed. I had the false sense of security that I was going to finally be able to wear the shoes that were made just for me from the beginning of time. I could be what was intended.

I learned how I feel and to set my compass by my true north. I spent far too much time being guided by the compass and expectations of others, I had to learn to how to use one. I did not know that a compass existed in my survival pack. I never had the need to look for it, for I had never taken it out of the box. I found it when I was faced with a storm that tested my every ability, and I would not have survived without it. I rely on that compass now. I am glad that I have it as one of my possessions. The few possessions that I do have I will guard and treasure.

On this rainy mother's day without my sons I am going to pray for the sun to return soon... I am going to pray that my structure has enough strength to allow my arms to reach to the sky and welcome the warm glow of the sun.

The "with" can be found in the tomorrows. As long as my eyes flutter to open in the morning light there can be hope of obtaining the "with" that I covet.

Tomorrow just may be the day my sons come back.

"I might cry tomorrow, but I may be smiling the day after. That's enough. That's the way life is. If I don't lose hope - tomorrow will come? Tomorrow will come if we don't lose hope... I learned that from Nana. But rainy days still make my cheeks wet with tears, even now. It was pouring, on that rainy day."

— Ai Yazawa