

rosalie

Nicole Amador

I want to die: she mouths when I come to visit

I hate you: Rosalie > the aide when she cleans the hole in her throat...dripping phlegm
when she coughs/yells/silent/gasping

larynx

from decades of smoking

I learn her caretaker's name and

someone new takes their place. They quit or she'd write

DON'T COME BACK = steno notepad

Before

her hands were gnarled from arthritis

taught me how to crochet and cross stitch and make those

ooooooooooooopy things that made a picture with little bits of yarn... one day sent me home

with a large olive colored paisley knitting bag full of hooks and yarn that I had

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

wound into neat little balls months before

I want to give this to you when I'm alive

i got really good at reading her lips

in her Craftmatic adjustable bed

she didn't look like a woman who would

fight in the bar/give her last dollar to a homeless man on the street while my father ~~food~~/come home after a week with a new "uncle"

diagnosis of bipolar 1 + alcoholism + suicide attempts = free room and board in the mental ward of Kings County Hospital

doctor > rosalie: you almost killed yourself this time

ok i'll stop

welfare wasn't enough so

rosalie's apartment sells drugs

me: afraid to use the bathroom with the pink cushion toilet seat that smelled like dirty kitty litter and the unflushed piss of drug addicts

glass in the vestibule of the building = always broken

door to her apartment = always broken - meets the frame but never completely closes

an invitation for anyone to come and go

rosalie's 58th birthday/first time i saw her hole/i mean larynx/stuffed ourselves into her apartment/drinking and drugs/empty glass bottles of amber and green filled with cigarettes strewn about/days old boiled hot dogs/Kraft macaroni and cheese on the stove/cleaned up/blue/white streamers/balloons on the walls

Happybirthdaytoyouhappybirthdaytoyouuuuhappybirthdaydeargrandmaaaaahappybirthdaytoyou

Make a wish.

Where are my

words

cheery/painful voice: help grandma blow out the candles

and we

swallow our feelings with Carvel ice cream cake/Lay's potato chips/wash it down with a three liter bottle of Pepsi/swallowed the lumps in our throats because she could not/swallowed them downswallowedthemdownswallowedthemdown

my father = foster homes/beaten/starved/illiterate/arrested/took things that didn't belong to him/fightfightfightwork with his hands/provide for his family/can't escape the trauma of his childhood

looking through baby pictures

My parents > me: there's a can of

Budweiser

in your bottle\

and your grandmother put it there and we laughed and you burped and fell and burped and fell



and burped and

fell...asleep

and we laughed

my inner child: blonde baby with curly ringlets who fell over and got back up again and burped
and burped until she fell into a deep slumber/ that took years for me to awaken/
and i grew and i grew and then
me > 300 pounds
did i awaken/or am i still sleeping/will i be free

generational warfare ends with me.

“rosalie” by Nicole Amador was first published by *Twelve Winters Journal*, Volume I [2021],
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