



The Girls Are Back!

Donna Ruth Brenneis

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A bittersweet, authentic and funny account of an aging woman who is emotionally stunned by the photographic re-appearance (on Facebook) of her biological ancestors after thirty-eight years. The author writes, "My friend... has ancestors who came in on Ireland's wind and rain. Mine bolted through time like desert lightning that splits the sky during a thunderstorm...." As she begins to engage in a blogging frenzy about her ancestors who concealed traumatic consequences of a family child molester for more than fifty years, the woman reveals a floodgate of contradictory memories by describing her large, dysfunctional tribe and heartfelt experiences. In doing so, she opens another door for future generations who may be facing, or have faced, the crumbling of trust and betrayals that splinter the spirit and cripple the senses.

The author's intimate blog, accompanying the newly-acquired old photos, attracts cousins she has not heard from in more than three decades; some acknowledge a healing process while others are guarded or show little interest, initially. One cousin responds, in part, "Denial is such a strange mechanism...what the mind does not retain, the body does. How many sicknesses would disappear if our minds let us see?...I know denial is a survivor's friend for those years that it is absolutely necessary to keep living, but later it turns on a person to become a killer." Encouraged and determined to understand family secrets, she meets Shaman OwlSnake who bridges the woman's personal journey by encouraging her to "Remember to Re-Member" her ancestors with an open heart. "Remember" refers to memories while "to re-member" represents the fragmented pieces that splinter off from our spirits when we are hurt or traumatized. When re-membering, we reconnect the fragmentation into a healthy whole again as though returning puzzle pieces to their rightful place.

This is story-telling at its most compelling filled with denial and love, grace and joy, ignorance and deceit, tenacity and sheer guts that will speak to millions of people around the world, particularly those who have experienced child molestation: a worldwide issue that continues to require the compassion of critical thinking and open-minded discussions.

A slice of CHAPTER ONE:

"LOOKING INTO THE past I see myself, vividly: 1991, St. Francis Woods – a swanky, velvet-green neighborhood in San Francisco, but I am in an empty, basement room that was once the maid's quarters. Other than a dim, inside light from the house next door, the place is pitch black. I am forty-nine years old, cold and alone, curled up into a fetal position for warmth on a filthy carpet in front of a steam heater that does not work. Three dimes are in my pocket. How did THIS happen? I was writing about forced removals in Cape Town, South Africa during the apartheid regime and now I'm homeless. It's possible I popped out of the womb condemning injustice so it's not a stretch for me to be involved in an itchy-bitsy, paper-thin slice of history in another country or on a different continent outside of North America. My name on the B-17 airplane probably was destined to be a symbol of my struggles against Nazi-types that began long ago."

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