

*Judith Stevenson*

MEMORY 1999

MAY 13, 1999

I am 49 years old

I remember

I remember

I remember

I remember

I remember

I remember

I remember

I remember

I remember

I remember

I remember

I remember

I remember

I remember

I

Remember

It

I woke up a couple of months ago from an anxious insomnia's sleep. Wide-awake in the dark. Steely cold. Hyper alert. Hair standing up on the back of my neck. Eyes exploding, open and searching around the room in silent realization. Feeling the memory rather than seeing it. How could I have seen it? I was a child in a dark room. The feeling of a coarse unshaved beard against my thighs and rubbing between my legs. Scratchy. The large strong hand holding my ankles apart. The hands are so big they almost reach to my knees. I was so little. Feeling pinned. I remember. I remember. I know. I know. I know. It was my father. It was my father. It was my father. It was my father.

IT WAS MY FATHER  
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I lay awake the rest of the night figuring it out. Putting it all together. The childhood dreams of someone chasing me. A nightmare. Night terrors. The nightmare of a man in a car chasing me. Running running running. Panting panting panting, hurting hurting hurting. The car catches up to me. I

turn. The man gets out of the car. It is my father. The dream repeats repeats repeats repeats repeats repeats repeats for years and years and years and years.

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Night terrors. I can't sleep in the dark. I need to have a light on. "Judy is afraid of the dark." My brother and mother make fun of me. I am terrified of darkness. I scream and cry when my mother tries to make me turn off the light. I wake up terrified. I hear snoring in my room on the other side of the bed. It is loud. It is snoring like my father. My father snores just like that. Snoring terrifies me. Snoring is a night terror.

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I wet the bed. Why did that happen? I wet the bed every night. When did that start? I was too big. I had already had a dry bed for years. The doctor says there is nothing wrong with me that a good spanking won't fix. He holds up his large man's hand like a paddle when he tells this to my mother. I am still lying on the exam table exposed. My little girl's body. Man terrors. Night terrors.

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IT WAS MY FATHER

IT

WAS

MY

FATHER

*where was my mother  
she knew*

*Joan Chen*

