

ENDINGS

THE DEATH OF MY MOTHER – FROM THE RIVER TO THE MOUNTAIN

BY SARA ANGELINI



My mother's death liberated me. My mother died silently. Silent life. My mother's beauty. Her death was not pretty; she died alone. My father still can't see. Her journey of passing was an extraordinary three weeks, which was a gift that keeps giving.

Saying goodbye to her was the hardest thing I have ever done. Leaving my own family in the process of it felt like a journey

into the underworld. My brothers are silent over her death. Between us it is as if she has never existed. Perhaps she hasn't. Yet her presence in the family home remains eerily strong, unchanged, strangely dis-comforting.

When I touched her dead body, it was cold and hard. It wasn't her, but it was how at times I experienced her. My mother was dead long before she died. Her hands so soft. My love to my mother and her love to me has become a quiet fact since her death.

My mother grew up not far from the river. A big river that like all rivers snakes its way down from the mountains to the sea, the wild northern sea. She toddled into the second world war, and with it came hardship and that devil of a drink, wrecking relationships and self-belief.

My mother fled that unbearable cocktail, silently taking a sort of terror with her. In her little brown suitcase, she arrived and settled in a cold place that was encircled by mountains. This was her journey from the river to the mountains. In many ways this did not suit her, she hated the mountains, and yet from thereon she was stuck with them.

Many years later, I her daughter had to leave too, inheriting her little brown suitcase of sorts. In a roundabout way I retraced her steps in the opposite direction, starting from the mountains and ending by the river. None of this was planned. And yet perhaps it was. I have always wanted to heal her wound.

And then the universe sent me my first babies, two for one. The delight of mothers was mutual but the terror was all mine. Never mind, they grew, regardless, kicking away ferociously inside of me, particularly in those silent moments when sitting with clients...and decided to make an early appearance.

I wasn't ready, my clients weren't, but they, so it seemed were; born tiny, like naked little kittens, eerily strong. For me it was an abrupt loss and an uncertain time of lonely beginnings. They were so small, I had no confidence they might grow or not slip out of my arms. While I was looking onto one, the other gone? But they grew into strong spirited energy balls, and my oh my, were they happy, my two identical girls, with their gurgling laughter, like two planets circling around each other, sweeping all of us along, setting the tone.

With their teenage exuberance they still set the tone demanding

to question what we think we know. Meanwhile, the little brown suitcase continued to be a faithful thread throughout the years, often playing a tug of war of doubts, and fears, and raising its own questions that demanded answers.

With hormones flying wild, those of teenagers, and those of the perimenopause, things intensified. The old pain of the loss of mother reared its head, and I sensed this was the time to conquer.

I had to slay this monster that had taken hostage of the insides of my mother's body, delivering death with certainty, and playing tricks of mis-perception. I had to go on this final ancestral journey, to put it to rest, and luckily the good spirits of the mountain and the river helped me along the way. For a good while they whispered 'let it go', and eventually I did, letting it float into the mother of all seas where it mostly rests amongst the bioluminescent creatures.

And only now, as my mother looks upon us *from over the rainbow, where troubles melt like lemon drops, high above the chimney top...* she is joining in the journey. Manifestations of feathered creatures and soft pines on sand dunes. The journey of finding my ground and voice, and through that her voice and her ground; the voice of women.

Her final journey sent me onto mine. We crossed in the sky, just as she foresaw. The moment of her death, in the ascent to the heavens, I struggled for breath, and then floods of light, while on the other side of the waters, her granddaughter fainted onto the soft ground. A crossing of threes of some sort.

And so I continue to marvel, at the experience of being alive and the potential of death, continuing to question and listen out for what is happening inside, between the lines, and in the wonderful etheric world of spirits. Together and alone, alone and together we emerge into a better world. That has always been the motivation.

The little brown suitcase now mostly contains treasures of times past; photos and trinkets that have the potential to fill my heart with a sense of acceptance and ultimately, gratitude. From the river to the mountain, and back, the journey of letting go and embracing what is, that's what I think of now, when I think of my mother.

Contact Sara at counselling@angelini.org.uk

EDITOR'S NOTE

Do you have an ending – whether professional or personal – that you would be willing to share on this page? If so, please send your poetry or prose (maximum of 900 words) to the Editor.