

Osgood Reporting by Miriam Ferguson

SOMETIMES, WHEN LIFE IS HITTING YOU with information or tags, it wounds you until you surrender. Mavis Osgood is my name and moaning, protesting and swinging my waist length braids are my claim to fame. In 2001 conditions were given a name, and placed in a space called final. Mama was peculiar that year.

Be cool. Stay in school is what they used to say on the After School Specials and gullible me followed their slogan. No boyfriends, no proms, no sex, no friends just school. Staying in school was not the problem. It was leaving school that made my demon rear its head. School was my only connection to the outside world. I have a knack for explaining things...in detail. That's why my schoolmates nicknamed me the Osgood Report.

Graduating from college presented real challenges. Conditions worsened. The Osgood Report couldn't find a job in the world of publishing or any other literary venue. So my gainful employment comes by way of public relations for Mickey D's or any other fast food palace. My office is a four foot by six foot patch of cubical prison. I'm surrounded by other displeased life forms. Together our miraculous minds produce astonishing ads for mass murderers, advertisement for a whole generation of unhealthy people. It pitiful; you'd think the CEOs of our heart attack nation would realize they are killing off their own customers. But sister needs a paycheck.

Did you ever hear of "Where's the Pickle", that's mine. I got that idea after dating a WWF wrestler. Steroids can have some mysterious effects; some take the mighty out of mike. All kidding aside, let me describe a normal day in my life and then you'll know how Mavis feels.

My days are not hindered by watching the late-late show; my internal alarm jolts me awake at 5 a.m. My first daughterly duty is emptying the morning bedpan, and checking it consistency, making sure to write my findings on a chart supplied by the hospital. A standstill here and my whole day is ruined. When people talk about mother-daughter bonds somehow they leave out how personal it can get. The drama in my life eclipses the bond. My second duty is asking the woman I once called my four-star general, a simple question.

"Good Morning, mother dear, what day is it sweetie?"

She sighs, throws her hands in the air and waves me off. She's giving me every indication not to bother her with such foolishness. It occurs to me that she may not be annoyed by the question. She may not know the answer. Her eyes don't lie. They are empty. She's gone into that that black hole. Leaning over her I plead,

"Come back to me mama."

Arching her back suddenly, and shifting her false teeth she lets out a barely audible grunt. I kiss her forehead and put my hand over her heart to let her sense I believe there's residue. Placing a pink pill in her mouth followed by a slip of water, I feel like I have just thrown a stone down a dry well.

The doctors diagnosis it as Dementia, and tag it as final. They had predicted it five years ago; Mama beat their timeline by two years. Yesterday she held on to the towel and said "no" loud and clear. That made my day. One thing surely known, there are two cracks at death's door called grace and mercy. I'm counting on mercy. Osgood Report sounds like I'm in control but in reality this is messing with my mind.

Why....Because there are moments at work when my mind seems to quit functioning. It's overloaded. It goes on strike. It just shuts down. I can't find my "to do" list or my "follow-up folder." I run from meeting to meeting with papers and pens flying and I feel like that scatter-brained White Rabbit saying, I'm late, I'm late, for a very important date. There are other times when I realize I've been moving from one activity to another at warp speed, without taking time to clean up after myself. My desk is piled with notes, folder, books and half eaten unhappy meals. The clutter is not only the product of my frenzied activity...it's a direct reflection of my state of mind...No wonder I'm feeling rushed, distracted, overwhelmed, final and like Mama.



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