



## 'Her Story'

*(As told by Jeanette K. Regnier)*

Installment Nineteen (February 20, 2006)

Jim and I just spent an emotional week with Matt and Emily's daughter, Cecelia. Matt has been so wonderful about sharing his tiny little girl with us. Most of her life was spent here in our home instead of the Franz homestead in Sturgis. We both appreciate that he will always share her with us and a part of Emily comes to stay with her grandparents about every three weeks.

This was the hardest of all visits. I guess Cece finally figured out that her Mommy is not coming back. There were many connections made in that super brain of hers and she wanted her mother! Here, now, in the room where Emily passed so quietly into the arms of angels. Cece was used to not seeing her mother all of the time as the last few months of Em's life was concentrated to either the U of M hospital or in bed. But every morning when Cecelia would arise from her soft sleep, she would ask to see her mother and the baby would crawl in next to Emily and Matt or just Mommy if Matt was already up and she would hug and hold her Mommy tightly.

Every night before she went to her room and her crib, Cecelia would join her Mommy and Daddy for quite time and story reading. This is still the routine we follow. She loves her books and Emily had amassed hundreds of children's books long before she ever met her husband. Because they are pure and sweet in their stories. Emily had written many of her own but never published.

A visit last week with the Physicians Assistant and her newly adopted son made things even harder. Lindsay was not just someone who worked with Em's oncologist, she became a wonderful friend and my link to all that was happening to my daughter every day. She kept me informed, let me cry and did all that she could do for Emily every single day. She also prayed with us and it brought great peace to Emily. Cece would sometimes see Lindsay at the hospital when she went daily to visit with her mother, so seeing Lindsay here and all the talking about her Mommy; this little girl made the connection between the two. Cecelia became more intense about her Mommy after Lindsay and Leo's visit.

The fact there is a Cecelia is the biggest miracle of all. Emily was told that she had a slim chance of ever becoming pregnant with her medical history and treatment.

For Emily, things did not stop at the cancer. Somehow, the destruction of healthy tissues from the chemo and radiation made its way to other organs.

In 1996 Emily started showing signs of a dying thyroid, she started on medication and did better. This was a clear imposition on her thyroid from the radiation she received. By August of 1996 there was another lymph node biopsy, this time it was negative but one year later, another lymph node popped up near her left ear. Diagnosis; NLPHD or Nodular Lymphocyte Predominant Hodgkin's disease. She had her wisdom teeth removed in preparation for the radiation to come. 20 radiation treatments that included the area that was previously radiated.

By November of 2000 Emily suffered with high blood pressure related to kidney damage from the transplant. A few months later and ultra-sound of the liver revealed that there were "spots" present. An MRI indicated 5 spots. It appeared that the birth control pill was to blame at the time. But a liver biopsy was preformed with uncertain results. Again, in March of 2001, another liver biopsy with the same uncertain results.

Emily had a abnormal pap smear in May of 2002 and testing done in August of that same year. All this time her bladder continued to bleed every single day, sometimes hurting ferociously. A polyp was discovered in her bladder, negative for cancer, just the result of the cytoxan from the transplant.

There is more but I guess you get the idea, that she never spent a great day physically since she returned home in 1994 from the BMT.

My dear daughter left this earthly world for one of great health and love four months ago. I miss you so Emily.

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