

This Was My Life

Interview/Profile Essay by Nakita Schneider

Several years ago, when my sister Bridgette Schneider was nineteen years old, she was one of many strong, valiant soldiers. Although she never went to any form of physical war, she faced many kinds on her own. Bridgette was a victim of a brain disorder called epilepsy. She, along with her family, has been through many hard times and struggles. I will never recognize how she pulled through so strongly.

As we sat at the table in the dining room, sunlight glistened through the windows and warmed our skin. Face to face, she knew she was going to have to articulate the worst time of her life, once again. She constantly was scared about what was going to happen next, when the next seizure was coming, and how long it would last. She said, "It was like I wasn't even a human. I didn't know how to cope with myself or handle my situation. I continuously felt useless, unwanted, and lonely.

"I was unable to do any simple task." She remembered constantly being angry with herself and blaming God for the pain she was living with and creating for many others.

"Why does it have to be like this? Why can't I be a normal girl like everybody else in the world?" She often questioned. She loathed being the "odd" one in the family, always causing so much trouble and pain. "I was the angriest when you and Dad were fighting about me. You guys would argue about who was going to take care of me for the day. I wished I didn't need the attention, and I hated taking it from you." Tears filled her eyes as memories replenished her thoughts.

Bridgette recalled how day-to-day life was often unbearable. She saw the sadness in our everyday lives and how she drained most vivid activity from our daily routines. She didn't want to put her family through that kind of hardship. "Just go out for a little while; I'll be okay by myself. I'll just go to sleep for a bit," she urged. Bridgette wanted us to have the normal lives we all deserved, but how? We were not actually going to leave her alone and unattended to fend for herself.

"The same thoughts ran through my mind every single day"

I asked, "What were they?"

"The only thing I would think of more than anything, the only thing I ever wanted was to be able to take a single step by myself again. I was so useless and had nothing to look forward to except perhaps death," she said.

I wished she wouldn't say that, and I begged her, "Please do not to think that way." But I knew she would.

And she did. "The thought of death paced in my head every single day. I didn't know how to escape it."

Speaking about her illness with others was always strenuous for Bridgette. During school, she got funny looks, rumors were started, and she was severely humiliated on a day-to-day basis. "I could hear some of the kids whispering as I wheeled through the halls," she recalled. "I usually just stayed in one room throughout the day to avoid the cruel, verbal bashes. I still felt worthless and shameful regardless of where I was."

"It was the worst experience I have ever gone through and I know that for a fact. Nothing could ever be worse than those two years of hell!" She emphasized.

“I understand the pain that remains in your heart; but you have a new life to look forward to these days, and you know what a survivor you are.”

“That was my old life,” she said smiling, “and now, it’s all glory!”