

On Red and 'Pank'

And Shades in Between

The most influential person in our life is our mother. Not to say that fathers don't greatly affect us, because they do, but our mothers are our comfort zone. Any stumbling child will call out one name as soon as they hit the ground; Mommy! It's the way God planned it, for she is the bowl in which we are mixed, the oven in which we are baked, and the platter upon which we are presented. Our life comes through her. Our sustenance comes from her. And our comfort comes in being near her. She is the first person we say that we would die for, and she is the last person we would ever want to hurt. Her voice can soothe us to sleep as well as stop us in our tracks. If we can only afford one gift, it's for her. If there is only one seat in the room, it's for her. If there is only one chocolate left in the box, even under weak protest, it's for her. Her position in our lives, if she is worthy of the name, can't be replaced by anyone else, and we revere her all the days of our life.

I was blessed to live in a house where my mother's mother also lived. They were as different, at that point in their lives, as they were alike. My mother was almost six feet tall; my grandmother was barely five-five. My mother slender; my grandmother had grown a bit stout with age. My mother would take a social drink rarely; my grandmother sipped wine, almost daily. My mother smoked cigarettes; my grand-mother dipped snuff. My mother loved to play Pokeno; my grandmother loved to play the numbers. My mother was great at cooking on top of the stove; my grandmother specialized in baking, (although my mother took over a domain that my grandmother had prepared her to take over). But where they were alike was in their gentle but assertive ways; their sharp minds; their being slow to wrath; their unwillingness to spare the rod; their joy in laughter; their faith in God; their caring for people; their love for family; their encouragement of their children and their grand-children.

I watched as the years turned tomorrows into yesterdays and their roles kind of flipped. As best we can tell, my grand-mother was 100 years old when she died in December of 1985. As she grew weaker, I watched as

my mother willed herself stronger so that she could provide my grandmother nurture and care and honor and respect and love until the day she died.

As long as I can remember, my love for them was so strong that I sought to fulfill their highest hopes for who I would become. In watching them, and experiencing them, I learned to love. In honoring them by my life and by my tributes and my commitment to their legacy of love, I feel that the greatest substance of their prayers have been answered. So it is in their honor that I present my writings to them and about them, and to all mothers as well.



Theresa "Pinky" Fauntroy Cohen
"Pank"



Yvonne Cohen Goode-Satterfield
"Red"

The Discipline of Love

If things go as I hope, I will bury my mother, and she not me.

Not that I fear death and want to outlive her, seeking the milestones of longevity,

But rather for love, that she not suffer what I think would be beyond her ability to bear.

Parents aren't meant to bury children, for that is a disruption in the succession of life.

When her time comes, I'll stand in the sanctuary and glorify my inheritance: not of riches but of wealth,

A wealth born by the wings of prayer and delighted by the discipline of love.

For love is a discipline and not an emotion; a decision not a feeling; a destination not a journey.

She has taught me to love my progeny; to represent God in the lives of my children.

As faithfully as the moon represents the sun and reflects His light in the nighttime sky,

So must I reflect the love of God in the lives of those who are my inheritance from Him.

Many were the nights when the moon was all there was to light my way, But always the morning would dawn as dependably as the sun had set, and the Son would light my world.

When the Son rises I bask there, for He warms and nurtures me; He exposes my path; He unmask my enemy.

Even when clouds come, and bring the rains and winds that sweep signposts from my path; even then He shines.

When I have tumbled from the path and was tricked to think I could climb mountains of loose shale;

When I've rolled through the briars and am covered in thorns and thistles and I am drenched in mud;

Though my skin is scraped away and my garments are torn and the stench of the dung of dogs covers me;

When I stand in my nakedness and in the foulness of my filth, nose running, eyes pussy, feet foul and blistered;

Even then He shines upon me; even then His love warms me; even then He shows me the way.

For His love, His light, depends not upon my condition but His position; and He decided to hang upon His love.

I pray that I might play the moon to His Son that I might light the nights of my children.

That I might proffer to them the same degree of grace that He has so freely proffered to me.

That I might truly practice the discipline of love and not be vexed by the fires of my emotions.

That my children might look at me and know the one they see and know my love will not change.

That they might look at me and see that I love them not for what they do, but simply because of who they are.

That they look at me and see that I represent Him, and great is the honor of the representative of a worthy master.

If things go as I hope, my children will bury me, and me not them.

For so deep is my love that I feel I could not bear to suffer my life without them.

It would be better that way, for such is the design of the succession of life.

And when they stand before the sanctuary, may they lean on the strength
of the One who shines within,
And glorify the Lord for giving them a moon that reflected the Light in
their dark and lonely nights
And that they were left with wealth born on the wings of a thousand
prayers and delighted by the discipline of love.



The Persevering Mother

The one who prays while others sleep
That the Lord would find a way to keep

Her children from the tests of life
Or help them rise above the strife.

On many nights she goes to bed
Hungry but her kids get fed;

The one who walks 4 miles each way,
At the start and close of every day.

She tries to make her home a place
Of peace and love and full of grace.

She smiles a lot and fights back tears.

This test has lasted many years.

The one who finds it hard to rest

With work undone, she gives her best,
And prays some more to God at length

To guide her path; to give her strength;

To do her job; to heed her call;

To lead her children through it all.

The one whose kids when they are grown,

Will never leave her there alone.

They'll not forget what she has done.

She'll bring them through it; every one.

They love her much, and much each other.

God bless the persevering mother.