

Still ingrained in my mind today is the image of the van
racing around the corner near my house.

The scout leader frantically telling my grandmother
my sister has had an accident at the pool.

As I stand on the neighbor's driveway watching my granny
break down in tears, my friend lures me to the backyard
and I escape, if only for a little while.

This time the next day we pull into the hospital parking lot;
Seven-year old me is bewildered by the sensory overload
of sirens, lights, yells, and screams emanating from the giant
cold and sterile building.

Doctors and nurses rush by, brushing me aside as a seemingly
vexatious and insignificant being with their pompous lab coats
rising like capes from the wind they leave behind.

The elevator ride up to the 8th floor of the trauma intensive care unit
is quicker than any other I have known, and I chuckle slightly as I know
not of what is to come.

The doors open and we are rushed out of the box by an entering
stretcher; teams of doctors surround it.

For the first time in hours I see my parents, sitting at the bedside of
my unmoving sister. Seven lines lead to her veins as if she is but a
pin cushion being given medications that would sedate a bear.

I gently caress my sister's arm, a wishing she would get up and come play air hockey
with my brother and I. But that would never happen.

Painful days come and go with the rising and setting of the beating summer sun,
and visitors I have not yet seen come to pray at my sister's side.

My pastor arrives and immediately embraces me in a warm and familiar hug
and everything is OK for just a few sweet moments.

Exhausted, my parents hold my pastor's rough calloused hands as they
give last rites and administer Holy Communion to my sister through
a feeding tube. And that was the last I saw of her.

Two days later I am whisked into a room overlooking the beautifully peaceful
pastures lining the hospital grounds, and yet the electricity in the air tells me
something is very wrong.

My sister's brain has swelled and her lungs have been damaged beyond repair.
"Brain-dead" is the term I believe they used. I break down not because I know
of the severity of the situation, but because I have not seen my father cry
once in my life.

Beth is not coming home, they say.

At 1:37 A.M. on August 4, 2005, my sister donated her heart and consequently
passed.

My mother still quakes at the flashbacks today; my father often gets lost in the sadness
and succumbs to his depression. Her grave is an everlasting sign of
love and selflessness, with the emblem of a dog and butterfly
representing her true passions.

It is with this legacy that my family carries on to this day, with Her spirit guiding us
through having a family of four ever since that one fateful August day at

1:37 A.M.

