

My childhood in bits and bobs.

Disrupting everyone's peace. Loud noises. Dancing in front of the television while someone else was trying to watch it. Dancing around the living room to The Spinners. Screeching sounds. Lawn gymnastics. Creature Double Feature. Flashlight tag. Kick the Can. Fishing. A bike posse. Running through the woods. More woods. Skating on frozen ponds. Spying on my older sister. Sleeping with newborn kittens. Rescuing birds. Losing part of an ear and still loving dogs. Believing Mary, the Mother of Jesus, had my back. Believing Jesus held my hand. Singing for my school at six, but not really discovering my voice until seventeen. Herbie Hancock's *Head Hunters*. Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. The King & I. Beethoven. Brahms. Carl Sagan's *Cosmos*. Movies... and more movies. Character voices shared among best friends. Wildlife Treasury Cards. Drawing. Painting. Wishing to write novels despite being a slow reader. Wanting to share my feelings on stage, but really wanting to share them on screen. Practical jokes. Self-deprecation. "They... who the hell is *they*?" Wanting to take someone else's pain away. Absorbing pain. Singing through pain. Music is everything. Art is everything. My dad's studio. My mom's thoughtful conversations. My grandmother's patience and prayers. My newborn precious sister. My Irish twin brother. My gifted younger sister. My brilliant older sister, who quietly held us together while my parents were distracted. Neighborhood bullies. Uncle William's calm demeanor. Lawrence Welk and the beautiful dresses. Buying candy for myself and cigarettes for my parents at the pharmacy. Crossing the street alone for the first time. A gang rape in my city. A serial killer in my city. Public school. Private school. Squish the melon. The smell of newspapers and delivering them daily. Sunday doughnuts and ... eventually discovering coffee at 13. Wondering how all these little pieces somehow became me. I am still collecting bits and bobs.