

How Can I Write When Everything is Wrong? by Maurisha Nicole

When Mommy asked me to write a poem for your funeral I almost choked on my own breath. I could literally feel the air in my lungs dissipating as the words left her mouth and wrapped around my body squeezing like a serpent who squeezes to kill his prey—constricted—with every inhale I tried to catch it, when I exhaled I almost fainted. Her words falling on my heart like a ton of weights, crushing it into a thousand pieces that couldn't be put back together with the finest of tools, glue, or kind words— it was broken – and although it had been broken plenty of times before, this time was different. This time it couldn't be fixed. This time the blow was so hard that I could feel my spirit which was once so lively—suddenly die—HOW COULD I?

There was no scripture in all the pages of the King James Bible that could inspire me to write a poem for my baby brothers' funeral! There was no mantra to help center my spirit. No glass of wine to numb the painful thought of going into my happy space—the place where I've always found comfort—the closet where I would spill my inner most secrets, feelings, concerns, and aspirations onto whatever piece of something that would hold the ink in which my words would be written with. There was no NOTHIN '! For the first time in my life, I had no words...

But I said OK- for our Mothers sake.

And then I prayed.

I prayed to God for the right words to come into my heart. I prayed for the strength to pull it together so that I could somehow get up the nerve to write a poem for my baby brothers' funeral.

But God never answered that prayer.

And the days passed. You were still gone. Mother was still crying. Your Dad, trying to stay strong for mommy, his face resembling yours so much so that I couldn't stand to look at him. The kitchen had begun to look like a florists shop and everyone was dressed in white, dark shades, and rubber bracelets that once gave us Faith, Love, Hope- WE were Team Malachi.

And still. I had no words.

And still, I have no words. It's been one year and nine months since you took your last breath, and still, I haven't written a poem for your funeral. And I won't. I will not use metaphors about life transitions, cliché phrases about being in “a better place” now, and I will not quote the bible in an attempt to bandage the wound that has been left on our hearts since your leaving us. I will not

make reference to what a good fight you fought, as we all know how courageous you were—you were MALACHI STRONG! But instead... instead I will be honest. I will say how I really feel. I will be angry when I want to be, and I will continue to question why your life was cut so short. I will cry when I watch videos of us dancing on Christmas, and I will smile when I hear your voice saying to the chef “keep trying”, when he failed to make the onion volcano erupt with fire— that was your favorite place to go. I will talk about you to everyone. I will make sure the world remembers Sissys’ baby. But what I will not do—I will not try to find the right words any longer— because there aren’t any.

In memory of my baby brother, Malachi Briggs- September 29, 2007- June 13, 2015.