

What If?

PERSONAL ESSAY & MEMOIR

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You were a kind soul. You were the epitome of selflessness and giver of unconditional love. Thirteen year old me was not ready for this.

But it happened.

That night you had no idea that when you went to sleep you wouldn't wake up.

As I sat there and was told of your departure, my thoughts ran together. My head pounded. My heart ached, my body grew numb. There was so much more left to say, there was so much more to do. The feeling of what if's would become the only words I could form everyday.

Crowds of people came to mourn your absence, but no one knew. Nobody knew the pain that filled my soul.

They had both their parents, they were going home tonight with a mom and dad. What if nobody ever understood?

You laid there, cold, still, lifeless.

Days turned into weeks which then turned into months. Life had turned into a gray reminisce of what it used to be.

Days weren't as bright, time was a blur, reality had become merely memories. What if I would forget you? What if this happened to everyone I love?

The darkness consumed me, the worries they became me.

What if the darkness never cleared?

Life had become a monotonous adventure of lackadaisical actions to get to the next day.

What if I am only ever anxious?

Your death was only the tip of the iceberg to much more to come into my life. Years later I am still fighting the demons that were created that day. Anxiety seems to be my only friend, it's the one thing that won't leave. I surrounded myself with all the questions, the worries. Those daunting thoughts became the only ones. I have yet to have a day go

by that I don't feel worried or that I should question things that are too good. It's a constant battle within myself. It has defined me, it is me.

What if I never feel normal again?

While death is hard, nobody ever tells you that coping is harder. Finding a way to express the built up emotions isn't something anyone can prepare themselves for.

What if my emotions consumed me?

As time has progressed I am supposed to be okay now. I shouldn't cry about this anymore, it's been 4 years. But now I know how to deal with all these emotions but my time has expired. All the people that lined up the day we laid you to rest are gone, I am expected to be healed. I should be over your loss and rejoicing in the time we had.

But I can't. What if I never get over you?

Fighting loneliness is only half the battle of losing someone, it's figuring out how to take that loneliness and deal with it. Controlling the questions that seem to always sneak back in is another, what if someone else passes? What if there is no light at the end of the tunnel? What if there's no more good days?

What if this dreadful, pain on the inside is now my broken reality?

Dad, thank you for the love you showed me in the time we had. Thank you for showing me how to be a good person. But thank you most of all for showing me how strong I can be.

What if it was supposed to happen to make me the person I am? ■