

New Nonfiction from Patty Prewitt: "Missing Amy"

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Former Missouri Department of Corrections Director George Lombardi who, during his 41 years in corrections, has never recommended anyone for clemency supports Prewitt's release.

In light of "the long sentence she has already served, the total support of her children and grandchildren, and her unprecedented contribution to the culture of the prison and to her fellow offenders," he recommends that "Missouri Gov. Parson take the just, responsible and compassionate action and grant Patty Prewitt clemency." Warden Brian Goeke identifies Prewitt as a woman best suited for release.

"Where'd you get these? Did an officer give 'em to you?"

"You think I'd do a guard for protein bars?"

He looked appropriately shocked, so I continued, "No one trades a protein bar for sex! Look around! These horny hos give it away!"

Unabashed because he actually thought he'd made a good bust, this skinny eighteen-year-old corrections officer then asked, "Then where'd ya get 'em?"

With the same degree of furious indignation, I spat out, "At the can-efing-teen! There's a list on that wall of what they sell! Why don't you check it out before you accuse this old lady of trading geriatric sex for protein bars!!!!"

As a mic-drop finale, I snatched the three bars from his hand, turned on my heel, and marched down the hall to my freshly-tossed cell to survey the damage.

At that very moment I missed my prison kid Amy with a heart-squeezing ache. We shared a cell for a decade and like an old married couple we regaled each other every evening with the events of the day—mostly tales of how stupid this prison and these people are. She would have howled at this encounter.

Because of her drug addiction, Amy passed through prisons for a couple of decades. I knew her during every incarceration and warmed to her readiness to see humor within the darkest of prison days. During her next to last confinement, she gave birth to a son. He was the one that she gave up entirely. She was finally mature enough to know she couldn't provide a child with any kind of stable life. Her two daughters weren't so lucky, and both ended up in this prison with us.

At the beginning of her seventh and final prison bid, I spied her across the chow hall at breakfast. I hadn't heard that she was back. Self-disgust radiated from her slumped shoulders and bowed blonde head, so this captain-save-a-ho ambled over to hear the sad story of why she was back. Again. As a conclusion to the convoluted tale about how she ended up with two sevens and two fives running wild, she quietly added, "Yeh, Patty, I

fucked up again. I'm under a mandatory fifty percent. Twelve years flat. I really fucked up this time." My heart broke for her and all the broken-winged sparrows who fall from freedom into prison. Breaking my reverie Amy asked, "Ya gonna eat that toast? Butter? Jelly?"

As I shoved my tray her way, an idea sprang to mind. "What wing are you on?"

"A, and it's a loud, disrespectful, trap-house zoo. Plus they put me on a top bunk above this rude, loud-snorin' bitch with boils all over her butt. Boils! She says a spider bit her, but I bet it's staph. No self-respectin' spider would put his mouth on that ass!"

"Amy, I have an empty bottom bunk in my room. If you want, I'll ask Ms. Raspberry if she'll move you over. They train service dogs now, and you'll love those pups."

Amy brightened like the sun breaking through a cloud. That's how we began our decade of cohabitation.

Because Amy owed nearly \$2000 in unpaid parole fees, she reluctantly headed straight to the dreaded clothing factory to get a job. The factory was the only place that paid a living wage, and she had no one on the outside to help her.

Within the relative safety of a four-person concrete prison cell that had been converted to jam in six, we made our home. The other four bunks were inhabited with a parade of girls just passing through. Some joined our conversations. Some didn't. Amy and I made a pact to keep the cell peaceful, and we did. During count times, I sat cross-legged facing her, while she perched on the edge of her bunk swinging her short legs. We verbally painted scenes, crimes, and memories from our free lives. We mulled over how the snarky librarian had admonished us. We worried about our kids. We conspired, aspired, perspired. No subject was off-limits. More importantly, I listened, really heard her. I didn't give her a

load of unsolicited advice. I just loved and listened. Therein lies the magic of healing.

When Amy was just a little kid, her father had her and her older sister at his place for the weekend. On the way to go fishing, he told the girls to run out to the pickup. He'd be right there. They waited until Amy couldn't stand it any longer. Disregarding her sister's protests, she raced back into the house to holler at him. When she burst in the living room poised to yell, "DADDY," she choked. His limp body lay crumpled across the rusty-orange shag carpet, a ragged pool of red blood oozed from where the top of his head had been, the smoking shotgun muzzle still stuck in his gaped mouth, hunks of brain tissue, blasted across the wall, lost their grip and splatted on the console TV.

Less than ten years later, Amy was a pregnant teenager. Her heartless mother never spoke to her again. Small wonder she self-medicated.

Amy was the same age as my daughters, so I couldn't help but mother her. I made sure she had the hygiene items she needed. I religiously placed a multivitamin on her locker every morning and encouraged her to eat her veggies, because she had Hep C. She loved softball and created, out of misfits, the best team in this prison. We didn't win every game, but she made sure everyone felt good about themselves. We laughed a lot. Even through tears.

When the goon squad busted in like rabid Nazis to tear up our cells, Amy would want to lay down and take a nap. Tornado warning? She would be overcome with drowsiness. Prison is one anxiety-producing occurrence after another, so I mercilessly teased her that she suffered from some form of stress-induced narcolepsy.

As an integral member of our prison theater troupe, Prison Performing Arts, I tricked Amy into taking a speaking role in

The Rover, a period piece with sword fighting. We were issued foam rubber swords, but during the first performance, as Amy thrust, the blade part fell to the floor. She was left holding the handle. At that moment Amy discovered she was a natural comedienne. She never looked back and was in every play we produced. A star was born.

All her life, Amy had considered herself a royal loser. A slut. A drug addict. A thief. A horrible mother. Stupid. Unlovable. A poor excuse for a woman. Ugly. A midget. (She was short, barely 4'10.) She had never glimpsed or believed in the special, talented human being that I saw in her. Acting became her saving grace, and she thrived on stage. When college courses were offered, she enrolled. Even though she doubted that she'd be able to do the work, with a bit of my tutoring, she turned out to be an excellent student. I'm a certified fitness trainer and talked her into training, too. The physical and mental work was hard, but she persevered and puffed up about an inch after passing the exams.

Our prison time marched on in its petty pace until we got the proverbial good news/bad news. The good news was that legislation had been passed that would free Amy soon; the bad news was she was not prepared. We always planned for her to work at the nursing home when she was eligible so she could save up a healthy nest egg. My daughter Jane set up a hasty go-fund-me account that raked in enough to buy her a laptop so she could continue her college. Amy left here with nothing but thrift-store clothes on her back.

It's hard starting from scratch, but she was doing so well out there in the free world. Clean and sober, working to keep spirits up in the nursing home. Then Covid hit, and life got really scary for the confined. She had the Department of Corrections on speed dial complaining about how prisoners were poorly treated. Out of the blue, Amy fell in love with a man unlike any she'd ever known, a kind and honest man who truly adored her. She was making me believe in happily ever after.

But Amy died. Suddenly. The addicts all attributed her sudden death to drugs, but I knew better and felt vindicated when the autopsy proved me right. Amy's big broken heart had failed. She suffered cardiac arrest as she was preparing to go to care for those women and men in the nursing home prison.

Real life is no fairy tale, Amy. I miss you.

New Nonfiction: “One Woman’s History of Sexual Abuse in Prison” by Patty Prewitt

Missouri inmate Patty Prewitt has been in prison for almost 40 years. She is serving a life sentence for the murder of her husband, Bill, in 1984. The conviction, however, is problematic. The prosecution’s case relied upon slut-shaming Prewitt and questioning her fitness as a mother based on relationships that took place five and more years before the murder, a time when the Prewitts were separated. The prosecutor did not share with the defense evidence that established a strange car was seen parked around the corner, a significant omission. A pathologist, brought on only weeks before trial was discredited in a number of trials where he served as a witness for the prosecution.

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As the longest-serving inmate at the women’s prison in

Vandalia, Prewitt has been a model prisoner. Former Missouri Department of Corrections Director George Lombardi who, during his 41 years in corrections, has never recommended anyone for clemency supports Prewitt's release. In light of "the long sentence she has already served, the total support of her children and grandchildren, and her unprecedented contribution to the culture of the prison and to her fellow offenders," he recommends that "Missouri Gov. Parson take the just, responsible and compassionate action and grant Patty Prewitt clemency." Warden Brian Goeke identifies Prewitt as a woman best suited for release.

In May of '86, 20 days after I first came to the prison near Jefferson City, I was shackled, chained, cuffed and shoved on a state bus to the prison in Chillicothe. Upon arrival, a male corrections officer caught me alone in my cell and strongly suggested, threatened, that I would be his sex slave with no choice in the matter. His words and manner were horrifying to this newbie, but his prediction did not come to fruition, because my new guardian angel cellmate, Theresa, made it her business to protect me. She was a large no-nonsense heroin-addict biker chick who had done serious time in Florida where she acquired absolutely no love from prison staff. She also teased me about being a scrawny country gal, a rube, but we both agreed that the perv was not going to get his hands on me, so help us, God.

In August of that year, after Theresa was paroled, word came down the prison grapevine that a federal court declared that male and female corrections officers are to be treated equally with the very same duties and rights. That sounded only fair until we realized that it meant that male guards could frisk and strip search us. A bit of panic ensued, but the officers I spoke with swore they didn't plan to jump into that trick bag fraught with unforeseen and seen problems. But it only takes

one.

As Carol and I exited the chow hall, this particular guard, a stout big-bellied greasy man, motioned for Carol to turn around and assume the position with feet apart, arms outstretched. Prior to this we'd only been patted down by females. To our shock and surprise, that man stepped close on Carol's backside with his face buried in her hair, then reached around to cup and squeeze her breasts. I stood frozen—the next in line. The color drained from her face as he roughly moved his beefy hands over her buttocks, then reached between her legs to feel her pubic mound. Color came back to her visage with a scarlet vengeance, while he retraced his steps from buttocks to breasts. I couldn't stay to witness the rest because fear kicked my rabbit legs into gear, and I found myself running, racing up the stairs to hide in my cell.

After I calmed down, felt safe to come out since he hadn't come after me, and shift change was over, I found poor Carol, a tall, handsome lady with considerable intellect and two teenage daughters who adored her. But her husband was abusive. During one violent event, as she attempted to leave, he chased after her like the maniac he was. He yanked open the car door but slipped while grabbing at her. She inadvertently ran over him. To ensure he wouldn't kill her and the girls as he had promised, she slammed it in reverse and backed over him which earned her 25 years for second degree murder. After 20 years of horror at her husband's hand, she did not deserve this guard's sexual assault in the name of penal security. From that day on, if that guard was on post, we'd miss a meal. Sometimes the chow hall would be nearly empty except for a handful of masculine inmates whom he never bothered.

A few months later, on December 14, I was called to the visiting room to see my parents and five kids. To my dismay that guard stepped from the side and in front of the female officer as he motioned for me to assume the position. (In those days we weren't strip searched prior to a visit, just

frisked. They rightly reasoned that we wouldn't be bringing drugs *out* of prison to our visitors.) I quietly appealed to his inner gentleman, "Please, sir, I'm a rape victim. I beg you. Please allow the female officer to search me." Trembling in trepidation, I saw and felt his rage explode like atom bombs within his gray eyes.

My five young children and parents watched this exchange while trying to figure out exactly what the hold up was. The pat search prior to a visit had always been quick, so to them this was suspect foot-dragging, but my protective father got the picture, narrowed his eyes and set his jaw. Attempting to sound like a grownup who's in charge, I sternly advised the officers, "If you're not going to allow me to visit, give my family the big box of Christmas gifts I made for them." Both stared blankly at me, so I bravely added, "Do you understand?"

By this time every husband in the visiting area was asking his wife if that particular greasy-headed fat man had run his hands over her. I was not alone in my indignation and could feel the energy shift. The guards exchanged looks and silently decided the female would frisk me and allow me to visit. But the moment all the visitors left the area, I was escorted to the hole for "creating a disturbance and disobeying a direct order."

In May of '87, that same man sent me to the hole again for the same transgression—refusing to submit to his sweaty hands on my body while huffing his sour breath on my neck. This was the last straw. A group of us dug around in the law library and successfully sued the Missouri Department of Corrections in federal court. On September 30 of that year, seven of us rabble-rousers found ourselves shackled, chained and sitting in court testifying to not only the abuse of officers, but, for some, the years of abuse by husbands and boyfriends. The kindly older federal judge was visibly shaken to hear a lady tearfully explain that a male guard had felt her sanitary napkin and interrogated her about it. Another lady had a

double mastectomy, the result of cancer, and was torturously embarrassed when a man made fun of her "flat-as-a-pancake" chest. We and the officers also explained that the searches were targeted to find cookies—cookies that were served to us on our trays at chow. That particular guard stumbled through his testimony as to why he must thoroughly search our breasts, buttocks and inner thighs to keep America safe, while his fuming wife glared from the gallery. Because of the fuss we caused, the Missouri Department of Corrections was mandated by the federal court to create a method for officers to cross-gender pat search without fondling and grabbing certain body parts, but of course no one can make rules by which everyone abides. I've had issues since with both male and female guards who can't help but take liberties.

In December of '89, a large group of us trouble makers were shipped back to the prison north of Jefferson City. While there I ran into several minor sexual skirmishes and wrestling matches, but nothing I couldn't handle until a new education supervisor was hired. Unfortunately I was his clerk. This persistent little man thought it was his duty and right to have sex with me, so he literally chased me around his desk. Our warden got wind of this problem and asked me if it were true. I explained, "If I tell you that he is inappropriate, I will go to the hole under investigation. Right? Well, I will not do that and miss visits with my kids." And I didn't. But I had another plan. My lecherous boss was friends with a recreation officer, and I let it be known that my brother would do bodily harm if I told him that a black man was abusive to me. Everyone had seen my big handsome brother visit, and evidently my boss believed my lie, because he nearly ignored me after that. The truth is my sweet brother was a peaceful preacher and never fought anyone in his life, but these people didn't know that.

The Great Flood of '93 ruined our prison and sent us packing to a men's prison called Church Farm. I was so accustomed to

unsolicited, unwanted sexual encounters that those years seemed pretty mild—nearly peaceful. For example, one maintenance man quickly lost interest in me when I harshly kneed his groin. Then in January of '98, we were transferred to a brand new prison in Vandalia with all new guards. During a count time, one COI, who resembled a bloated Elvis impersonator, knelt at my chair in front of my other three cellmates and sincerely inquired, "What do I have to do to get you to suck my big ole dick?" My friends inhaled in shock, but after he disappeared, Donna remarked that the reason he jumped up and exited quickly was the lightning quick drop-dead look I shot at him. As if!

During the next couple of years, more than several staff persons were caught with their pants down and lost their jobs. One sergeant in particular had a type: petite, pretty, young, white. One of his targets, a lovely twenty-year-old with a soft bootheel accent, asked me for advice as to what to do. I counseled her that if she tells what he's up to, she will go to the hole. Her only safe recourse is to never get caught alone around him. But this panicked kid confided in a grandma-like officer who slammed her in the hole just as I predicted. The girl rotted down there for months until she "admitted" she lied and then was transferred to another prison. Standard operating procedure.

Years of his terrorism passed by until this sergeant met his match. His final victim, who was beautiful in a mean way, spit his semen on her sheets and called her lawyer who called the cops. I never found out what became of the sergeant, but this gal sued and settled for millions and freedom. I thanked her while telling her that we'd been trying to get rid of him for years. With her hands on her slim hips, she leaned back, cocked her head and plainly told me, "Ya weren't tryin' too hard." With a chuckle, I had to agree.

For years we were terrorized by a guard who loved to grope us and call it a routine pat search. Not only did he pull up

close on a butt, he'd grind his hard little penis on the butt and whisper nasty words in an ear. If you protested in the slightest, he cuffed you and hauled you to the hole, the original walk of shame. Everyone, including staff, knew about him, but staff turned a blind eye. Every hour he was on shift was torture. My friends and I were repeatedly in trouble over him, and he took down too many good women. He would still be employed here, except he was arrested for a pervert-related crime in the free world.

In 2010 I heard about a federal law called the Prison Rape Elimination Act, which was designed to prevent vulnerable prisoners from being sexually assaulted by either staff or inmates. A few years later, as I exited the chow hall, a male lieutenant called me over to assume the position for a pat search. In my smart-ass way I casually commented, "So much for PREA." PREA must have been a sore subject, because he yelled at me a long tirade about how they don't have to follow laws and can do anything they want with us and to us because we have no rights and nobody knows what goes on in here because we are hidden and nobody cares about whores. He was so angry that he didn't even see that a crowd had gathered around us. That's how crazed he was with neck veins bulging and snot and spittle flying. He finally noticed his audience and gruffly ordered us to disperse. A few more years passed before our prison was forced to abide by PREA and stop cross-gender pat searches, but by that time I had grown old and gray, so guards and other staff ignore me as an object of desirability. I may be the only woman ever who is thankful for wrinkles and white hair. Prison staff still yell at me and treat me like a stupid slave, but none want to have sex with my scrawny old body. Praise the Lord.

New Nonfiction: “A Bridge” by Kent Jacobson



Take me to the alley

Take me to the afflicted ones

Take me to the lonely ones that

Somehow lost their way

Gregory Porter

The twelve-foot chain link capped with concertina wire said, *Whoever you are, you aren't welcome*. The penitentiary sprawled on a barren hill in a forgotten tract in Connecticut, far from houses or schools or the next town. It was 1990, the dirt and rutted parking lot empty. Maximum security didn't pull many visitors, and this would be my first time inside. I recognized no fear, not at first.

I remembered waiting as a boy in a lot outside another penitentiary. I perched in the passenger seat of the state car my father drove, the black 1950 Chevy with the siren and flashing light. Dad exited the facility smiling. The men inside fashioned signs for the Rhode Island Forest Service and were likely paid very little. The work, Dad said, was always good, always professional, and always on time.

Great oak trees surrounded that old place.

Here, there were no trees, no flowers, not a planted bush. A twilight overcast pressed down as I made my way to a squat, concrete-block building that appeared to be the welcome center, beyond which crouched the penitentiary, a low mean spread of menace which housed two thousand inmates. I explained to the officer hovering behind dark, inch-thick glass what I was there to do. He grunted.

He asked for a driver's license and peered into the worn briefcase Dad had gifted, checking for anything an inmate might want as a weapon. He dropped the license into a drawer and extended a laminated pass through a small hole in the glass, and with the sweep of an arm, he motioned to a steel gate through the chain link.

Dad had been a hard man. While he never came clean about his earliest days, I realize now he was aware a ghetto kid like he had been, loose with brawlers on a drunk through Providence speakeasies, could have landed in a prison making signs. Possibly he smiled as he left that Rhode Island penitentiary

because he felt lucky.

He'd floundered as a student and dropped out at sixteen to do piecework in a factory where he poured out work with speed. A threat to more senior men and making hardly any money, he turned back to finish school. And throughout the Depression, without support except an immigrant father's scorn, Dad bulled a path through college. He worked a year and enrolled in school the next.

He died a decade before I entered Osborn Correctional.

I flinched as the steel gate clanked shut behind. I crossed a dirt yard on cracked asphalt to an officer in a head-to-toe black uniform, and I flashed my laminated pass.

"Wait here."

His glower said, *Forget it. We have more to deal with than you.*

"Screw 'em," Dad would say, "whoever the hell they are, whatever the bastards do. Sometimes, you've got to stand and be counted."

Black uniform ordered me through a second, heavier steel gate where more guards lurked behind more dark glass. My Harris tweed jacket, the worn briefcase, and the evening hour said who I was.

I'd been warned about the guards.

The second steel gate clanked shut behind me. My stomach churned. Will anyone open these doors when I want *out*?

There seemed to be no laughs in this dwelling, only these cold mothers and their freaking gray walls.

"Why you here?" a voice barked from behind the glass.

"I teach in the college program."

Books won't help thugs, Mister, I was ready for him to say.

He gestured down the wide hall.

"Take a right down there and go till you find a guard."

Still no waste of words.

I did what he said and took a right into an enormous, extended corridor. Voices blasted off the walls and concrete floor. Inmates exited a room far ahead, most of them bulked up bodybuilders in identical tan shirts and tan pants. They thundered toward me four abreast, one pack after another. I stepped faster and avoided eye contact.

They ran over 225. I was an Ivy League poster boy in tweed and corduroy. Their faces said, *Who's the punk? Who invited him?*

What had I expected? I'd joked the inmates might have two heads and keep cobras as pets.

A woman at a party asked why anyone would teach in a prison. Wasn't the place dangerous?

I said teacher-pals declared prison the best experience they'd had in a classroom and didn't say more. Their conviction was absolute and I bit. They'd crossed a bridge they hadn't supposed was there and learned something, though they didn't say what.

Bedlam grew as more streamed from what was maybe the dining mess. Masses of them, and too many to count. They howled.

What am I doing in this place?

I showed my pass to a guard I found. I said I taught the English course. He smiled and proceeded down one more hall to a room assigned to Jacobson.

"Is this experience new for you?" he asked.

The guard seemed curious, not at all prickly. He wished me the best.

Inmates passed and nodded to the new guy. They smiled.

I thought, I must be in a different institution.

The room that was mine had an immense oak desk and a matching oak chair. I wasn't going with that; I wanted no barricade. I took a plastic chair-desk from the front and turned it to the other chair-desks in neat rows facing the front, the oak desk and chair and the blackboard behind me.

I tried not to think what men had done to end in maximum security. Murder, pedophilia, armed robbery, rape, the worst crimes were the most likely. A section of my brain spat images of fiends.

Get a grip. You can't teach fiends. Dad drank with Tommy Pelligrini, a man rumored to be in the Providence mafia. Tommy wore a navy suit and a modest tie. His memory seemed to quiet my mind.

I understood little, nonetheless, about the actual men I was teaching. I'm certain I looked grim. I picked fingernails and fooled with the marriage ring on my finger. Men were finding seats. I rooted in my briefcase for a pen, a pad of paper, for nothing. My back had a knot the size of a golf ball.

Would I recognize anyone? I scanned the roster.

An inmate asked a question and I gave a too brief answer. I didn't initiate conversation like I usually did in a new class.

I glanced at my watch and a voice inside chirped, *You've crossed scarier roads than this, boyo*. A buddy remarked once on my cool in a crisis and my son, Morgen, cracked: "Dad's good in a crisis. It's ordinary life that gives him trouble."

He was ribbing, though I hoped tonight he was right.

I counted twenty-three men in all. Half, I would learn, had killed someone. Most had spent their childhoods in fractured homes, abandoned by fathers whose savvy might have pointed to a better pathway.

The men sat in four straight rows, seats directed at the teacher like we had in grade school. I didn't ask them to form a circle because I planned to hog the talk tonight. They were black men except one, everybody in a tan uniform with a buzz-cut. White people can't tell one black person from another, a smart observer said.

The single white sat in a far corner. Outside, darkness had fallen and inside it wasn't bright. He wore deep-ink shades. What lay in wait there?

I'd memorize their names and offer that much consideration.

Now. Let's go.

I called the roll and scribbled a note when a man responded. One had red hair. A coffee-colored inmate displayed freckles. One was Goliath, a second a featherweight. Another wore a bandana. Still another had a sweeping scar on a left cheek.

I went one by one, up a row and down the next. I used the scribbles and named each inmate correctly. Bodies straightened. The room perked. Two mentioned how little respect they received in Osborn and others nodded.

The next would be easier, I thought. I would describe in general terms what we'd read and their writing would analyze in coming weeks: American writers from Irving to Twain to Baldwin to Tobias Wolff, with a handful of accessible poets.

I started to speak and couldn't get the words out. My hands shook and my voice fluttered. Fear had taken a public walk. I stopped. I couldn't teach like this.

A hand shot up three seats away. The Goliath, maybe in his twenties and close to three-hundred pounds, a football player once, I bet. He plowed holes for running backs.

Head down, he waved a hand, hesitant.

"Can . . . can I say something?" He spoke with a stutter.

"Sure," I said.

He held a beat, reluctant to say what he wanted to say.

"You . . . you seem nervous."

"You got that right."

The room exploded. Laughter, every single man, belly laughter, even No Eyes behind the ink shades.

Without a prompt except my fear, the men spilled their first hours in Osborn, last week or years before. The shakes, the diarrhea, the sleeplessness, the stares into the dark, the dread, the guards, the threat they might not live.

They did their best to talk me back from where I'd shrunk. They'd been there. They understood. Don't be ashamed. We managed. You can too.

I'm old. I forget names. Days are shorter and they fly too soon. I admit it was a tiny episode in a prison, years ago, hardly worth a mention.

The moment stays.

We are you, they said. We are you. These men who were like the mill kids I grew up around, only older, and in more serious

trouble. Men who brought me back to my brawling father.

They weren't foreign. They weren't strange. For a moment, they saw me as I was. Like them, afraid. They were me.

I came from no fractured home, I hadn't been abandoned by my father, I hadn't ever been so continually disrespected. Yet here I was, at a bridge my father knew.

And there they were too, waiting.