

23 June 2006 – 3am

I miss being able to ask my mother for advice.

I remember visiting her in the nursing home and looking at that leathered old face with the almost blind watery eyes and wondering where my mother had gone. Where she had slipped to over the years? Where was that woman I could relate to – the one who bought cars, took out mortgages, went to work? The one I could ask for advice – what to do with a bad cut, or a stomach-ache, or a lousy job.

And I read her diary from high school and the letters she wrote home from overseas and I see first a spoiled self-indulgent young woman who is very tied to New Bedford and home and then a much more self reliant woman who wandered half way around the world with my dad.

And then I remember the mother who was both loving and caring and tough and out of control. Who dragged her children out of school so she'd have company on sales trips to Boston. I'd navigate and light her cigarettes.

I think she lost her support system over the years and sunk more and more into avoiding discomfort. It became very hard for me to relate to the woman who preached:

Tender Hearted Touch a Nettle
And it will sting you for your pains
But grasp it like a Man of Mettle
And it soft as silk remains

I so wish I could pick up the phone and call her wherever she now is...