

## number one important soul

“Dad ate good, I fed him,” Patricia, the LNA (licensed nurse assistant) toll me right off as I walked into my dad’s room, 209, a share at Woodridge Nursing Home. “He ate 75 percent of it.” Good news to my ears cause, he stops eatin, he’s got a week tops though his temp might drop tonight sub-90 degrees and he might sleep hisself home. Or though he might catch a fever and weaken to null from that.

Those are a few possible ways the finish line may get crossed by my dad, William Wallace DeWees, n I’ll be watching the whole time. Not so fun for he or I . . . but I ain’t complainin.

I ain’t complainin cause dad is 92 n seen years you and I may never come close to seein. Years he filled with family, work, spirit, fun, caring, God, and ice cream. Loads of it all, then loads more. The harshest critic after watching a movie of dad’s life would leave the theatre crying, “Triumphant! A trillion stars . . . Bill won,” so I ain’t complainin.

I ain’t complainin cause I met a women here, she’s young. Toll me she’s got terminal cancer. Toll me it straight like you tell someone you got a hangnail. She’s very pretty. Great hair. She spoke to me with a smile and wide eyes. Wears a morphine pump around her waist that she jacks when the pain dims her smilin eyes. She’s probably 50 and fills her days walking the halls listening to music while dodging the nurses and aides as they trot serpentine through their daily routine. This cancer lady will not see the years dad’s seen. So, no, I ain’t complainin.

I ain’t complainin cause the nurses and aides trotting about their business is a beautiful thing. It’s a beautiful thing watching them (mostly women) feed, wash, and love my dad at this special time in a way mom, my sister, and I can’t. When these pretty ladies tend to dad I look dead on in their eyes to search for a spire of grace that I might steal away and keep so I might be worth 5 percent of what they are 100 percent. Important souls.

Important souls taking care of my number one important soul.

I ain’t complainin cause dad, even at the shape he’s in now, ain’t complainin. He’s always been the non-complaininist cuss I’ve ever known. Now there’s a trait to steal away and keep. It’ll be dang near impossible, but I pull off 1 percent of dad’s non-complainin ways, I’ll die happy.

Sorry this column isn't funny or particularly entertaining, I just need a little therapy zall.

When you experience loss, you see, you feel for yourself not for the lost. Recall please always hearing on TV the stunned mother cry for her dead son, "I'll never see my little baby again." Maybe it's not too odd that the stunned mother rarely laments the fact that her son will never see her again. She cries: "The killers took my son away from me," not "the killers took my son's life away from him." Mourning, the tiny bits I've started so far, so far seem selfish.

Today I teared at the thought that sometime in the not so distant future, there will be no way to hear the actual sound of my dad's voice. No way. Not again ever. Never.

What a frightening, lonely thought.

But I ain't complainin because . . .

Lay flat

Close eyes

Listen deep

For the voice

You hear

Then speak

Marilyn

Yo Marilyn

I'll be

I am