

# My Mother's Chair

## Introduction

Steve Brooks

It's 2015, twelve years since this story of my mother's chair began. Time and subsequent events have shown the effects played out in many ways. I can see now that I must have adored my mother as a child and that my separation from her was both normal and unique to our relationship. That early adoration and infatuation became a pattern in my relationships with women, over the years, as did the falling away in time. I now see many of my own characteristics were formed from watching and learning from her, as well as being inherited. Living with my mother for six months was one of the greatest things I've experienced in my life, including my six months in India, and just as profound, but it was enlightening in an entirely different way. I have not fallen away from either experience in lessons learned and memories cherished.

Two years ago, my brother, who had changed his name to Johnnie Mark Brooks and his sex to female, killed himself, in Nashville, Tennessee, where he was a beloved character in the Blue Grass Music Scene. That story is told in my book, *Eating Pizza With a Spoon*, available on Kindle.

I have moved to Asheville, North Carolina, after teaching in Ellensburg, Washington for five years. My brother broke off all communication with everyone in his family and with his best friend, back in Moline. three years before he died. He lived five hours away, and I never knew it. When I told him I was with the woman I am with now, I think that helped alienate him from me, but I believe his alienation was inevitable.

This book, *My Mother's Chair*, is about taking care of an aged and dying woman. It's also about my relationship with her and how that relationship affected my relationships with women and with the world around me. I have an addictive personality, and the last addiction I have addressed, in recent years, was the addiction to desire in relationship with women. This story chronicles how my love for my mother morphed into a benign addiction to romantic love. As a poet, romantic love is the stuffing of the goose that laid the golden egg, until one begins to feel like *fois gras*. Enough. As a recovered alcoholic, I've been grateful for the lessons learned in letting go of any and all addictions. I speak of this and many other things in this book, since I was a writer, and a writer of *journalese*, long before this episode. Staying with my mother was a crucible for which I will forever be grateful. I came to love a woman who was not easy to love, and I came to love myself in a way freer than ever before. Thank you, Mother.