

November 1986

Dear Life:

It has been eight months since Henry, my biological father, died in Michigan. So much has transpired since his passing. The person I have fought to be is coming finally into her own.

This terrible longing, searching, insecurity that has been a strong force in my life to this point is fading so very rapidly that I am astounded. I finally feel that I know who I am, have an understanding of who loves me, that I belong in a very human manner and that there need not be another moment spent in desperate drifting. I have found my home. It has been with Vince all along; it has taken all this time to mature, so to speak. That tangled concept of a father-daughter relationship that was so distorted by trying to understand, cope with, and create the idea of what my feelings should be, where they are placed, with whom and how they flowed over into my personal life relation with others have delayed my being able to fully appreciate and understand my personal relationship to important men in my life and the most important man - Vincent.

At last there is freedom from a yearning compulsion to find myself through individuals that to me are important in my life transition. I am beginning to feel like forging in my own terms my destiny. That destiny is intrinsically, universally, and simply of and with Vince and Vince alone. This, then, is the meaning of my full cycle - the maturation of my being. There is a wonderful feeling of newness and a multi-hued strength that I have never felt before. My biological father had to die and I had to see him in the flesh after all these years to finally understand my feelings, who I am, where I am and where I am going.

Thank you, Dunc, for standing by me in such times and for your wisdom and foresight. As long as I live I probably will not fully understand your wisdom. For your belief in me I will be ever indebted. Despite all the experiences that precede this moment, legislative and professional accomplishments, my speeches, recognitions, personal moments in searching for who I am, challenges, this year is extremely important.

I am now free to be with Vince as he may never fully understand given his life environment and up-bringing, his clear-standing knowingness of who he is. Knowing who you are makes it very easy to commit to a direct path of action instead of continuously searching for a stability that one may not even comprehend. Now, I am walking away from that uncertainty that prevailed and can appreciate full well what being married means. I just turned forty-six and I have only just caught up with Vince, my love. I am learning much. I can learn more.

PATRICIA D. MARY GABRIELLA
CARPIO WHITING

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Tigard, Oregon 97223
April 3, 1986

My Sister, Kay-Elyse; my Mother, Doris; my Uncle, Gabriel;
and my Aunt & Uncle, Rosa and Toribio:

The end of last week Aunt Rosa in Los Angeles called to tell me that she had called Daddy Henry (her cousin) in Michigan. She spoke to Lillian, his wife, who informed her that he was in a comma after suffering physical illness. After speaking by phone a couple of times to Lillian and than not able to reach anyone at Daddy Henry's home on Sunday, I proceeded to fly Sunday night to Menominee, Michigan near Lake Michigan just north of Wisconsin.

Monday, when I arrived, I called their home and was informed that he had died Saturday night. After asking to see his body, I was informed that his Wake would be at 4:00 pm at the Cadieu Funeral Home in Menominee. I could see him there. Lillian and Daddy Henry's daughter, Lillian, then informed me that they did not want me to visit further or attend the funeral scheduled for the next morning. As I had come to see Daddy Henry and would do so at his Wake that afternoon, I felt it was proper to say goodbye to him there at the funeral home when I would see him for the last time.

I was able to see him for a few moments. Daddy Henry was a bit smaller than I remember him and he was thinner but he looked exceptionally beautiful and peaceful. I had intended to stroke his arm or merely touch him in a goodbye. But, his casket was surrounded by glorious flowers and arrangements making it difficult to get physically closer than I was. He looked so very fragile. Seeing him and saying goodbye was a great deal in itself as I will explain later. Each of your messages and thoughts I spoke to him and said goodbye with each of your names. On his suit lapel he wore his pin awarded to him for his years of service in governmental work and he did look very good.

Lillian and their four children were at the funeral home and Philip Anthony (Tony), their son, introduced me to his brothers, Patrick and Henry. I was able to shake their hands and wanted to convey an understanding for them in their loss even though our meeting was brief.

The next morning, Tuesday, April 1st, his funeral was to take place followed by a burial in Menominee where Philip said he would have wanted to be buried because he loved the area in which he had spent his last years. I was able to obtain only the card enclosed for each of us while at the funeral home. It notes his date of death as March 28th, but I was told that he died Saturday night. I returned home to Oregon Tuesday night.

This journey was an extremely important one for me and also for my sister as I took both our thoughts and wishes to him. He was our father, the father we did not get to share. A couple of hours before Daddy Henry's Wake was to begin and just after I had arrived by air, I had a chance to meet, personally, with our half-brother, Philip. In the time we had together, we shared some thoughts and a few life experiences. In a gracious and worldly manner, he brought a sense of timeless closeness to those strained moments for two families separated and linked by our father now deceased.

Philip is an extraordinary person who, in conveying his understanding of our father's love for my sister, Kay, and I, exhibited his own personal humanity. It was Philip's own insight and interpretation of life that brought such a message from Daddy Henry to me for us despite the distance that prevailed by other family members upon my arrival in Menominee. The message my father never verbalized but nonetheless was felt within our being had been conveyed by his son--a son who was and is very close to his father.

When Philip said, "I want you to know that your father never stopped loving you and Priscilla." It was difficult emotionally for me to resolve the meaning of love in that instance. He loved us. But my mind raced through the past of childhood poverty, need of food, medical care, and clothing for warmth in youth. It was difficult to understand given the disconnection of relationship and the lack of communication that existed. Our letters in childhood, now long past, had not been answered. The question of "why" if he loved us rushed through my mind and heart.

It was only at this moment that "why" became part of the equation in my mind. I had not asked myself that question before this because I had been dealing with the question "what"--what did our father feel for us? Deep within the emotional part of life we felt there was love. Without knowing "what" it was difficult to ask "why" which seemed presumptuous given the circumstances.

It was not the time to raise these experiences that Kay and I had survived. For one thing, Philip knew nothing of this, he did not know all the inner most thoughts of his father (as no one can). For another Philip had just experienced his father's grave illness and the loss of a person he admired and loved. And, it was only a couple of hours until our father's Wake was to commence and he and his family had to get through Daddy Henry's funeral and burial the very next day.

Later, being able to see Daddy Henry once again after all those years and even in his death as he lie in his coffin at the funeral home, I understood what Philip had been saying.

He had loved us in his fashion, in his mind, and in his heart. Seeing him there, then, and only then did I realize that he was just merely a man. He had raised and cared for children--his second family. He did what he could do in dealing with life as it was.

That he had not included my sister and I in that form of relation did not mean that our father was not capable of such. He was. At that moment a great empty ache in my being was dissolved for the first time in my life. All at once I realized he was not a super human as I had built in my mind that a father should be, could be, would be.

Here lied Daddy Henry, a person, my father, who lived a life and had died. What had gone through his mind when Kay and I were children? Did he wonder about our needs of basic life nurturing and the aspects of child-father dependence? Possible he thought, given the fact that we had a strong, life-filled mother who clung tenaciously to the whirlwind of life, we could "make it" and, therefore, he had nothing to worry about. I don't know. But at that moment it did not matter as it has mattered all my life.

I finally realized and I understood. He loved in his fashion whatever that ment and he was merely a man who did in life what he had to do as each human being attempts. Now, I no longer have to search for answers or ever wonder again about Daddy Henry not inquiring about Kay or my welfare in years past. For many years this subject weighed heavily upon me. Now, given the episode of the last few days, the pieces and the solutions came together and are extraordinary simple.

The pain has faded and that closed door on which I psychologically knocked for years is now wide open. In an instant, seeing Daddy Henry, I experienced bursts of brilliant rays of sun color, multiple hues and an expansion of space, horizon upon horizon, limitless expanses.

Having shared privately an hour and a half with Philip, I came to realize that there definately was great substance to our father. Great that we each, I feel, knew in our hearts but my sister and I did not know in our minds or physical life experience.

I can now convey to each of you that loved Henry in a different way as a brother, a cousin, a child, a former wife who have not been able to share him over the years that he passed on his capabilities and individuality to his son, Philip. I was taken with him and saw that part of Daddy Henry I remember in Philip.

I want you to know that I had a great need and urge to get back to the east and visit Kay's and my father. I did not know if it was the proper thing to do. In the final analysis it was Vince that urged me to make the journey. He understood as I did not.

I am indebted to our Aunt Rosa for calling me and urging me to try and see him. I am also most grateful to my half-brother, Philip, my father's son for being the person he is, for his searching for answers and for his insight and humanity. I wish to thank my mother for trying to keep alive Henry's memory those years in youth. I thank my sister for the person she is, for her support in making my journey. She and I have survived at great odds and have each excelled in our own right creating and forging contemporary frontiers. And, last but not least, Uncle Gabriel, my thanks to you for your love and for your communication.

Now I send each of you a warm hello from Vince and me in Oregon.

Respectfully,

Patricia De Abriea Carpio Whiting

PAT WHITING

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father which art in Heaven,
hallowed be thy name.*

Thy kingdom come.

*Thy will be done
in earth, as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day
our daily bread.*

*And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.*

*And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:*

*For thine is the kingdom,
and the power and the glory,*

for ever. Amen.

MR. HENRY CARPIO

BORN:

DECEMBER 14, 1904

DIED:

MARCH 28, 1986

HOLY REDEEMER CHURCH

REV. FR. JOSEPH GOUIN

RIVERSIDE CEMETERY

MENOMINEE, MICHIGAN

CADIEU FUNERAL HOME

PATRICIA D. MARY GABRIELLA
CARPIO WRITING