

Spring



“He wasn’t visiting heaven, not in the way we think of heaven. He described it as a vastness that you can’t even imagine. It was a place where the past, present and future were happening all at once.” -Roger Ebert to Chaz Ebert the week before he died.

I'd been sick. Stomach flu. Regular flu. Too much work. Too much winter. Too many clouds, snow, cold. So much politics, people, problems. Too many deadlines. Taxes. So much nonsense. Too much life.

So I turned off the I-phone. Turned on the I don't give a shit. Took a big swig of NyQuil pm. a couple Tylenol pms. Turned in about 8:00 pm. Pulled the covers over my head and went off the grid.

And spring came. Suddenly I was young again...

Perfect weather, about 70 degrees. I was driving home from work (even when I'm dreaming I'm working). I had loosened my tie (I haven't worn a tie to work in about 20 years) and had the windows down, some Bob Seger on the radio, sun warming my shoulder.

I was driving home early to cut the grass. But as I pulled up to the house that I lived in all those years ago, my boys Eric (about 10) and Tommy (about 9) were both in the driveway with their ball gloves. They wanted to play catch. They were so young, so innocent, and so excited that I'd come home from work early. How could I say no?

So I grabbed my ball glove out of my trunk (I had a ball glove in my trunk!) and we played catch. Threw my boys grounders and flys. Pretended we were big leaguers. Told them they were going to play for the Cardinals when they grew up.

We finished up, and here come my pre-teen daughters Sara (about 12) and Courtney (about 11) on their bikes wanting me to join them on a bike ride. (Wait a second, how can my kids be 9-10-11-12 at the same time?) They were so young, so innocent and so excited to see their Dad. How could I say no?

So I got my bike out of the garage (I had a bike!) and we rode around the block. In the subdivision that I lived in circa 1990. They yelled at me to go faster, I told them to be careful. They were fearless on those bikes, Sara, my oldest, looking out after her sister, Courtney. Oh yeah, Sara's in charge.

We get back to the house and out comes their mom, looking beautiful as ever, and she teases me about coming home early and spending all the time with the kids. She's like to see her husband once in a while too she says; and gives me a wink. Nice.

And then I woke up.

Ever have that kind of dream where you wake up and you don't even know where you are? This was that kind of dream. I didn't want to wake up.

I just layed in bed and stared at the ceiling. I was happy. It felt so good to see my kids young again, to have a baseball glove in the trunk, a bike in the garage. I felt so good it hurt. I tried to go back to sleep, to recapture the dream. But it was gone.

So I got out of bed, made a cup of coffee and went out to get the newspaper. It was early, pre-dawn, crystal clear star-filled sky, sun just peaking up over the horizon. And I was smiling, thinking about my dream.

And it occurred to me that my dream was not really a dream, but real memories. Actual events that had taken place in my life, when my kids and I were young. No wonder the dream was so real; these events happened, just not all at the same time. Back in the spring of my life.

It further dawned on me that good things have happened to me in all the seasons of my life.

Now, (early I hope) in the “autumn of my years” I have grown-up children who love me, grandchildren that make me smile, and a wife I can't wait to get home to. A great life!

But there's only one spring.

I hope Roger Ebert is right.

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