

Whitney Petersmeyer
Prayer from the Pews
April 7

A reading from my journal
September 2017
A note to my mom

I decided to tell Riley about you today.

I'd been dreading this moment because I was sure it would change her forever. That my deep feeling kid would become fearful. A worrier. She'd worry about me dying. About her dad dying. Darkness would eclipse her light. Like a weed that creeps into a garden, this could just take over. Ensnare the flowers. Close in on her big bright world and make it smaller somehow.

But I went for it because I wanted this to be something she feels like she knew forever. So no script, deep breath, I told her you died when I was little, even younger than her. I told her I have two mommies, one who lives in heaven and one who lives in Maryland and that's the one who you know and love as Jules.

I paused and searched her face while she took that in. I braced for tears and a breathless line of questions. But those never came.

Her face was... Peace. Love. Light.

Then this little girl of mine, barely 5, locked eyes with mine and only asked one question.

"Did God choose both mommies for you?"

That day, in that moment, she didn't ask about death. Not about loss. She wasn't sad or scared or panicked. She was focused, curious, peaceful.

"Did God choose both mommies for you?"

There was Hope in her voice. The kind of Hope that lives deep within her. The kind of hope that is not wishful or unknowing, but a hope that is certain. A holy Hope. Her eyes danced with fierce conviction, like she'd just answered a question, not asked one.

"Did God choose both mommies for you?"

Not - did God choose one to take away (and the devastating corridor of questions that door leads one to).

Rather - did God choose *both*.

Not reductive. Expansive.

For you. Not - in spite of you. *For you.* Did God choose for you the gift of two profound relationships, one spiritual that you can only feel, the other earthly that you can see and touch? Two relationships with two beautiful spirits that grow and evolve with you, in you, forever?

At 5, Riley's framework is not one that's small, finite, anchored by time on this Earth. Hers is a framework of abundance. Of infinite love. Of life everlasting. Quite a command for the transcendent for a kid who'd never been to church.

And so I offer a prayer for where Hope lives:

God,

Help us understand Hope as simply and beautifully as children do, children for whom heart and head are so much the same, before life has had its chance to make them dueling teams w/in us.

Help us nurture Hope in its purest form, etched on our hearts with you but also in our minds where we seek and consider Truth.

Put souls and moments in our paths when we need a holy reminder that Truth and Hope are inextricably connected, and that life, like love, is everlasting.

Do this so that we may translate Hope into action in our lives, and live more fully in your image.

Amen.