

My life might be considered uneventful if it wasn't for the fact that my father killed my mother and then himself when I was fifteen years old. I was not around when this happened. By chance, design or maybe destiny, I was visiting my Aunt Audrey at her summer home on Canandaigua Lake.

People kindly told me that there had been an accident, and that neither of my parents was coming back. Later, I pieced together information from my friends and newspaper accounts. In a twist of irony, my father, Frank Rawlings, who sold pharmaceuticals, was taking anti-depressants when he shot my mother, Betsy, and then himself.

My mother was an only child, so after my parents' death I was sent to live with my father's only sister, Aunt Audrey. She spent her summers at her camp on the lake and the rest of the year she lived in a leafy suburb of Rochester where the schools were good and the problems facing the teenage youth in 1995 tended to be who was going with whom to the prom, who made the varsity soccer team and who was taking drugs.

Not that I cared one way or the other who was doing what. I had my select friends that didn't ask too much of me and were fun to be around. Many of my closest friends also had summer camps at the lake.

And at a time in my life when I had no direction, the lake was like a beacon. I looked forward to the end of the school year when Audrey and I would pack up our things and head there for the summer. I never knew what drew me to the lake; was it the love of the place or the relationships I cultivated there? This is a question I have yet to answer. I do know this: my story ends with my return to Canandaigua after years of being away. But it began that summer when I first discovered the courtship of the mayflies.

