

## Preface

I have been defending my behavior, thoughts, and my very being for my entire life, at least in the moments I recall. As they say, the struggle has been real. The pain has been searing. And I've also experienced confusion, like a cloud cover that has had me questioning at times what is before my very eyes, even though my gut screams the answers to everything.

I have carried the burden of being "the fucked up one." It might be a tad dramatic to refer to myself as the black sheep of our herd, yet the fact remains that my relationships with those I will love until I die have been strained. I have been told this is because of me and it has been my fault over all these years. All of it. I have had my reasoning questioned. I have been accused of being irrational. My biting rage has caused many tears.

What a piece of shit I am. Yes, that is negative, self-hate talk.

However, in my defense I have been avidly seeking answers—my answers. Why am I the way that I am?

I am a major depressive.

I have PTSD.

I have anxiety disorder.

I have bipolar disorder.

I am a survivor of childhood sexual abuse.

I am a survivor of rape and sexual assault.

All of these experiences have been diagnosed and discovered after my extensive search for the reason of my being here and anywhere for the last forty years and more.

The whole mystery of me has been revealed in real time and techno-color—all of it triggered and then fueled by the passing of my father.

Again I say, tragedy is always laced with beauty, and for me the truth is the only beauty I want to know.

I feel relieved. I feel as if a weight has been lifted off of my sad little girl soul. Why? Because none of it was my fault. None of it. I was a bipolar mixed bag of trauma let loose on the world with no backup, just my backbone and the biggest dose of stubborn this side of the equator.

And now? I am healing. I am holding that sad little me by the hand. I let her cry when she wants to. I tell her I love her. I believe—I believe she will make it.

She is stubborn too.