

Death is life's only promise, the grand finale. The ending result to all mankind from the moment of conception. I was eight or nine years old on my expiration date. I wanted to be a child.. to laugh without any real cares in the world...to jump double dutch and play kickball....to create dance steps to the newest urban tunes. But he had a different plan for me. He stole my youth, like a clever thief in the night that enters the home without sound. He snuck into the bedroom of a child. An innocent child, with my father's long nose, slanted eyes just like my Blackfoot Sioux grandmother, skin caramel colored as smooth as fresh butter.

Why me? Why would a grown man forcibly take something that he should not desire? In my mind, I questioned him repeatedly until the death angel removed him from my hands. "Suck it for me!" Through the wide space, between his front two teeth, the dreaded words escape. I pretend I don't hear him. My mind goes back to a fishing outing with my granddad. My bobber is moving and I'm about to pull my catch in.

A single tear escaped my eye as I remembered being pulled from my bed in the middle of the night. Wearing a burgundy bathrobe, Austin placed his pointer finger to his lips ensuring I didn't make a sound. He ushered me into the dining room which was right on the other side of my bedroom. I was ordered to lay down on my stomach. I looked Austin in his eyes, silently pleading that he stopped and let me return to my sleep. My prayers to God of freedom did not help me. He mounted my rear and there are no words to describe the pain that ripped through me. I was too scared to move--my breathing held in fear. Perhaps, he would just kill me. All that I loved and loved me had been removed from my life. He seemed to be lodged inside of me and struggled to remove himself. In the same sentence that he told me to return to bed, he warned me that next time it would be the other hole.

Excerpt from *Despite My Odds: A Memoir* by Denise Monique