Cultural Daily

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We Are All From Boston

Esther Bradley-DeTally · Wednesday, April 24th, 2013

Boston feels like a sink hole, an asphalt taffy road with unexpected, unplanned for sags, taking the nation down and then up. Our hearts run to each other in times of tragedy, and someone else's child is ours. We claim him, her.

Boston is in my marrow, even though I left there when they still hadn't found the Boston Strangler, you know the guy who was murdering old women, and I was renting a room in Belmont, and the other roommate, Miss Bell, was very old.

I waited for the Cuban Crisis to be over, kept huge boxes around in my small vertical room, with tops open. I had ended a relationship and just couldn't do law firms, relationships, or disregard from relatives anymore.

I had a VW grey Volkswagen convertible, with actual orange, Marx Nixt sticks, which to this day I don't know how to spell, but I tell you, that car would go 55, and that was it, and by the time I edged out of Buffalo, my second morning, I was glad, because the heater was frozen, and I wouldn't have made it through a Boston winter.

What's in me from Boston? Libraries, libraries, libraries. Books, and my autodidactic self which took itself around books alphabetically, until I had read everything every author I fell in love with had written. In high school, as a rebel, I quit checking out books, and just stuffed them under my raincoat, and returned them that way.

Boston had the Charles River and the Harvard Teams crewing, but before that West Roxbury had Billings Field which was flooded in the winter, and my boys' black hockey skates flew over this field every day. It was a time of Roast Beef in the dining room with the family on Sundays, and weekly meals in the kitchen for just us kids: leftovers on Mondays, Spaghetti on Tuesdays, Wednesdays I don't know, but it was an era of the same type of meal each day, and our clothes were picked out the night before. School, the Randall G. Morris Elementary School was one block away, and on the first floor almost at the end was my mom's room, and it felt as if I had a night light, even though we kids couldn't have mom as a teacher.

I remember the smell of tight, smell of rubber, pink balls which bounced against garage doors with a thwap, and yearly visits to the Constitution, walking down narrow steps to its innards, and I remember visiting the Bunker Hill Monument, reading Johnny Tremain, and everything else for that matter, all stitched inside my soul as "Boston."

I don't remember girls having showers in high school, so the concept of running a marathon didn't hit me until I was in my early 40s, and started running 3 miles a day.

In my era, we witnessed black out curtains, shortages of tobacco, sugar, and we jumped on tin cans, and later fought over who could massage the round orange ball inside the plastic covered white lard package to make margarine. We rooted for Ike, and laughed about having a naked man

swing in the trees at the top of the hill where the Water Tower stood, a silent sentry to his bizarre behavior.

Boston's a town that changed quite a bit; a town where prejudice of skin color and class etched pain in anyone's heart in the 1950s. In my small patch anyone who wasn't Catholic and Irish were suspect, except at high school, Roslindale High, and then we kids didn't draw any type of line around, through, or over friendships.

But somehow, maybe because change was in the air, always necessary, and because of books, and unobserved deeds of kindness, I didn't pick up the alcoholism in the family quilt, and I moved to California, leaving the idea of skin color scorn and judging someone who didn't speak the King's English. Los Angeles in the early 60s was bizarre and multifaceted. Still, Boston, was a good place to be from, despite James Joseph "Whitey" Bulger, Jr.'s cavorts, and the horrible racism of Louise Day Hicks. I somehow knew change would come when we managed toeholds on the crust of the 60s. So now when I hear of newscasters laud the tightness of solidarity, I wonder. Is that really true?

But I tell you, we are all from Boston, or Newtown, or New York, or Baghdad, or Congo when atrocities hit us or others. The human heart has a way of moving borders. Got to tell the leaders about this. They need to know.

We all know the two men were found, one killed, the other at a hospital in Boston, still to be investigated. Somewhere else online today, as my fingers and brain race over facts and images, a scientist comments to the effect that the people are like the white cells in a body, rushing to heal the injured wound. That's somewhat close, but, reader, you catch my drift. I wish everyone strong healing and love. For you as well, for me as well. Because we are all from Boston.

The One Fund – Boston* has been set up to help the people affected by the events of April 15, 2013. We encourage our readers to contribute: *http://onefundboston.org/

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