

## Doorknobs

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I've never remembered the exact date, in truth, I think I intentionally forget. As years pass, it becomes less important which day it was.

My boyfriend at the time called me in the middle of the night to tell me what had happened. It was actually 1 or 2 or 3 days after it happened. I went and checked my e-mail and my friend... my friend (she'll never know how important she is) had been trying to contact me and couldn't. So the date was never burned into my memory. I never asked. At the time, no one said.

It doesn't matter. I've struck out all of August as the month he was killed. I used to say that thinking about Mike was like an old bruise. You forget it's there until you poke it. Yep- it's still there. Yep- it still hurts.

It is startling how certain events can bring that pain into perfect focus. Normally dormant, the smallest catalyst can bring vivid color to the loss and despair I once felt. At least now I can write about it. I used to sit down to write about the event and all that would come out was, "I'm so angry," or "I'm so sad," or something else equally dull. Unlike some, I was unable to funnel my anger into my creativity. The pain rendered my creativity impotent.

One of Mike's favorite bands was Radiohead. They came out with the CD OK Computer in the same month that Mike was killed. We had all heard a lot of this CD prior to its arrival from Mike. Until recently, I have avoided this CD like the plague. I would pick it up and without even considering it, put it down again. It's a good album. I wasn't ready for it before now and even now it still has implications.

During my immediate mourning of this event, I heard a sermon by a Unitarian minister who had recently retired due to a newly diagnosed cancer. He described the hopelessness that entered his life. He compared it to being in a dark room without even the smallest speck of light and as you lose your immediate fear, you grope around in the dark and find a rusty old doorknob. You take the doorknob and begin to shine it. Rub it against your sleeve. The rust begins to flake off and it might be your imagination, but there is a small bit of light reflecting off the mottled surface. You continue to shine with more fervor and, yes, it is light. You shine and shine and shine until you can see the room and the door and where the doorknob should go and you walk out.

The minister's sermon still resonates in me despite my lack of faith. When the pain and loss return, I think of this story. I stand in a dark room too, but now, almost 8 years later, I stand tall and defiant with my small and now beautiful doorknob.

From Exit Music (For a Film) from OK Computer

Breath, keep breathing

don't lose your nerve

breath keep breathing

i can't do this alone