

A Stillness of Thought Kathleen Cannon

Chapter 1

Awareness

As sleep melts from my mind, I feel a warm glow penetrating my three-year-old body. A familiar scent and feel of a pillow cradle my head. My blue eyes slowly open to see the window just off center, to the left of the bed. Through this portal the sun is smiling its morning glow and warmth into the blue-green bedroom with glorious, laughing brightness. I'm washed in pure joy and feel the radiance of love!

I burst into laughter!

Look! I have a body!

I throw the warm covers off, jump up, and run downstairs as fast as my little feet and legs can go.

I must tell my mommy!

"I woke up alive today!"

Chapter 2

Trauma

It's mid-October, the shiny knotty-pine walls and waxed cream-colored tiled floor bounce with reflections of the afternoon sun. The living room is vibrating with the music of Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash. My sisters, Linda and, Vicki, and I prance around the room with our rhythmic bodies, twirling each other, laughing, singing, dancing round our little brother, Wilson, as he plays on the floor.

Dad walks in the room, just coming home from work, asking where Mom is. Excited because he's home and out of breath from our aerobics, I tell him, "Mom's taking a nap."

We four kids, happily jabbering among ourselves, follow Dad into their bedroom.

There she is! The blankets are up to her neck. Her face is so pretty!

As dad sits down on the edge of the bed; he picks up a pair of mom's panties off the dresser, letting them hang from his fingertips, he lightly drags them over her smiling face.

Their playing mesmerizes me.

Now that I have my siblings quieted down and playing with each other in the bunk- bed back room, I move into the living room.

The house is quiet.

I sit down on the left end of the green couch, where mommy and daddy make cigarettes. I reach over, pick up a rolled cigarette and the silver lighter, flip its top, and light up.

I hear a noise; it sounds like knocking on the walls coming from mom and dad's bedroom.

I can hear them, but not their words.

Their voices sound mad.

The door handle is jiggling, but the door isn't opening.

Someone is screaming!

POW! The bedroom door slams open!

Mommy! Crawling across the hall floor into the bathroom!

She turns, in front of me, crying, blood all over her naked body!

Daddy! He just pounced from the bedroom!

He's standing over mom like a giant, kicking her and yelling swear words at her; "I'll kill you, you god damned bitch!"

She is so tiny.

With each kick, she screams out!

They are right in front of me. They don't see me because I'm hiding behind the smoke of the cigarette.

I can't breathe!

Mommy's almost to the living room door.

Mommy's screaming, crying, naked, and bleeding!

I am four years, ten months, and fifteen days old...