

mental illness—are particularly difficult to bear. The freezing death of McGovern's daughter is matched by the ending of Swados's brother—his body is found locked up in a windowless shed erected in front of the abandoned storefront he had been occupying. Greg Bottom's brother is serving a long sentence in a prison ward for the criminally insane. Other patients die slowly and painfully as a consequence of their disease; both of Dickey's parents die of alcohol-related causes. And Ann Patchett's friend Lucy Grealy dies of an overdose that did not seem to be planned. The fact that these deaths often occur at a time when the authors have temporarily suspended involvement with their loved ones is an everlasting source of regret.

Others are alive and doing better at the memoir's end: a tribute to new classes of medication that had come into widespread use by the 1990s. Jackie Lyden's mother is stabilized on Lithium. Tara Holley's mother does well on Chlorazil. They do not emerge from years of illness as whole and happy people able to make up for lost time. The wear and tear of their difficult lives has taken its toll on body and spirit. Advancing age and the side effects of the drugs do the rest. They are subdued shadows of who they could have been. Medication alone is not enough; therapy and a lot of concrete and emotional support from family is needed to sustain improvement. So much time has passed. So many helpers present at the beginning are no longer available. Still, the remaining family members soldier on. And for some, the right drug is still to be found. After a promising beginning on Risperidone, Jay Neugeboren's brother suffers a relapse. His hopes dashed once again, he responds, "I feel, simply, very sad, and enormously tired" (299).

Next to stories of lives that ended or improved at midlife after decades of struggle are a cluster of memoirs by parents describing the events leading up to the suicides of their children. Memoirs by parents whose children died by their own hand bear striking resemblances. For the most part, they are written by widely recognized public figures. Danielle Steele is a best-selling author of romance fiction, and Gloria Vanderbilt is internationally recognized as an heiress and fashion designer. Substance use and mental illness come together in most of these situations. Like McGovern's daughter, who was brought down by alcohol, Steele's son dies of an overdose of

narcotics. Even though their children had problems with substances before, these endings are seen as ambiguous. It is hard to believe that they really meant to take their lives. Gloria Vanderbilt's son jumps off the terrace of their apartment. She does not accept that it was a suicide, believing instead that his action was caused by a prescription drug that brought on a sleepwalking dream. As all the other lost children, he had so much to live for. Prominent psychiatrists and private hospitals, loving families and paid attendants did not, in the end, make a difference. Celebrity authors consciously use their name recognition to raise public awareness and, with the profits from their books, establish foundations to research the causes and cure of such untimely deaths.

Whatever the outcome of the long journey, all the authors would agree with Martha Tod Dudman as she reflects on her experience finding help for her troubled adolescent daughter: "We were all just thrashing through the woods in darkness. There was no map" (*Augusta Gone*, 252).

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Care Relationships

Love gives us the right to hold contradictory judgments about ourselves, about the ones we love; we discover truths that would be in absurd opposition if they hadn't been spun in love's loom.

—C. K. Williams

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