

No Memory But Fear

I can recall the homecoming!

Let's go back to when I caught polio (then infantile paralysis). I was four years of age. Was misdiagnosed as having rheumatoid arthritis for three weeks, then after a visit from a specialist was transferred to an isolation hospital. My parents did not (were not allowed) visits for a full year and then I was transferred to another hospital 50 miles from my home. By this time, two very nice strangers bearing gifts plus hugs and cuddles came once a month. After almost four years, I was sent home because I could walk on callipers and because it was August 1939 and the country and the hospitals were preparing for War.

Now the strange thing is I have absolutely no recall of the above events. All these details were told to me by my mother and can only be proved by the odd snapshot taken at the time.

I do recall coming to a house I didn't know, to a sister who did not exist when I left and to the nice people who had visited once a month! The horror and the nightmares I had sleeping in my own bedroom ALONE! After four years sleeping in a ward with 20 others, the constant presence of the night nurse and the small light always alight on her desk, the feeling of abandonment and fear is my abiding memory.

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