

Something's Wrong

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When Life Gives You Lyme—
What's Killing Me Could Be Killing You Too

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SOMETHING'S WRONG

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Dedicated to my family.
Without them, I would not have survived this crisis.

The following story has been pieced together from my snippets of memories from the summer of 2012. My family and friends filled in the blanks as best they could. It is based on the truth, but not all instances may be accurate.

THE BEGINNING

“Hey, girl! What’s up?”

Rose’s relaxed tone, on the other end of the line, usually calmed me down. Not today.

“I’m pregnant.”

It was the first time I’d said the words out loud. Hearing them was a punch in the gut.

“You’re kidding.”

My friend’s jesting response irritated me.

“I wish I was. God, I wish I was!” I could think of nothing worse.

“Lisa, are you sure?”

“Rose, I’ve had three kids. I know how it feels to be pregnant!”

My friend’s response was hesitant and still rather light-hearted. “I know, but I thought you went through menopause? Honey, you’re 51 years old. Women your age don’t go through menopause, then a year later get pregnant!”

“I know, I know,” I said, trying to convince myself. “But the signs are here. I’m so tired I can hardly function. I’m nauseous most of the time—just like I was with Callie. And my entire hormone level is making me crazy! Hot flashes, dizziness, everything’s the same, Rose. I haven’t felt this way in years!”

I could tell my friend was thrown. There were no words for what she must have been thinking. I found her silence frightening.

“How long has this been going on?”

This answer rolled off my tongue easily. I haven’t felt good for a couple weeks now. But lately, I’ve been miserable.”

I think I’d finally convinced my friend. “Wow, what are you going to do?”

“I don’t know,” I said. “I’ve always thought any woman who had a pregnancy late in life, was just careless and stupid. Now I’m one of them.”

My mind kept rejecting the information. Every time I tried to focus on the problem, I became overwhelmed. Ignoring it was getting me through the days. But I knew it was time to do something.

"I have an appointment with Dr. Curtis tomorrow. I'm going to wait and see what she says before I tell Hunter."

"Good idea," I heard Rose say. "I guess you will have. . .options?"

There was that sinking feeling again. My breathing became rapid and I felt like my heart was going to pound out of my chest. I couldn't face that question right now.

"I gotta go," I said, no doubt leaving my friend with more questions than answers. I dropped my phone into my purse and zipped it, as if I was burying the evidence. My hands were shaking and my last cup of coffee was in my throat. My third panic attack of the day was imminent.

I opened the back door and slipped out onto the porch. I gulped the air like it was sweet nectar. I folded my hands tightly and prayed this nightmare would be over. What was I going to do? My wonderful life, as of late, was falling apart. I never felt well anymore. I lived with a dull, continuous pain permeating my body. My thoughts were foggy and my memory was worthless. How could I have let this happen? Shouldn't I have known I could still get pregnant? Why didn't someone tell me? Why isn't it posted somewhere in life that you can still get pregnant at 51? I thought about crying but I'd done that already today. Being angry seemed the more responsible approach—but at whom? My husband? Myself? God? I shut my eyes and willed this whole mess away, knowing that wasn't possible. I had to deal with it—but not now. Now, everyone was hungry. I needed to focus on my duties as the mom and wife of a busy household. Letting them in on my little secret definitely wasn't going to happen today.

I took one more minute to give myself a private pep talk, then I went back to the kitchen and turned my thoughts to dinner. Although I hated to cook, and my stomach wasn't up for it, it was definitely more appealing than contemplating pregnancy woes. I opened up the freezer and waited for something to jump out at me. Nothing looked appetizing or easy-to-make. I toyed with the idea of just calling out for pizza, but that was my go-to on a busy school night. Instead, I picked up a bag of tater tots and a box of chicken. This would have to do.

I popped the frozen items in the oven and sat down at the kitchen table. My head hurt, my hands were trembling and I felt like I could throw up. I swallowed the bile in the back of my throat and allowed those pangs of worry to hit me again. I just couldn't turn off my thoughts. I tried to reassure myself that things would be fine. But, how would anything ever be 'fine' again? I already had 3 children—three *older* children! I counted out the months in my head of when this baby would arrive. January? February? The exact date didn't matter. It was the fact that there would be 15 years

difference between it and my youngest child! My gosh! I was planning to retire in 6 years! I was old! I was tired! I couldn't physically handle a baby right now!

And Hunter. . .he would never be able to accept this news! He acted traumatized at the news of being pregnant with number 3! To tell him now, at his age of 55, and after all these years, I was expecting again? I don't think our marriage could survive it! I was so stupid! I stopped using birth control after my periods stopped. Obviously, I was still fertile! I gave myself another mental tongue lashing and felt the tears begin. My perfect life, my perfect life. . .what was I going to do?

I heard Callie, my youngest, close the garage door behind her. I quickly dried my eyes and prayed she wouldn't notice what a wreck I was. . .

Too late! I couldn't mask the embarrassment and concern on my face.

"What's wrong?" she asked the moment she saw me.

My thoughts jumbled in my mind. I didn't know what to say.

"Mom, what's wrong?" she asked again. "You look like you've been crying."

"Oh, no, I'm fine," I lied, still racking my brain for the reason. "I. . .I just pinched my finger in the drawer." The silly lie was the best I could do.

"Ooooh, let me see," my daughter said, being her usual considerate self.

"There's really nothing to see," I said, rubbing my finger. "There's no mark. It just hurts." I hoped my acting job was enough. I wasn't capable of coming up with anything better.

"Did you run it under cold water?" she asked. "That's always what you tell us to do."

"No, I'll give that a try," I said, thankful for the reason to turn my back toward her. I ran the perfectly fine finger under the water then quickly turned the attention to her.

"So, what's up with you?" I asked, pulling myself together mentally, as best I could.

"I'm going over to Connie's if that's okay. Her mom tried this new recipe and she invited me over for dinner. She knows I'll eat anything, and that I'll say I love it no matter what it tastes like."

I laughed at her reasoning. "You've had lot of practice with my dinners, right?"

"Awe, you're not as bad a cook as we always like to pretend. We just like to tease you, Mom."

"Thanks for the compliment. . .I think," I said, happy to have my mind on something else. Maybe that would be my saving grace tonight—staying

so busy I wouldn't dwell on my problem. There would be plenty of time for that after my appointment tomorrow.

"You go right ahead and go," I said with a genuine smile. I'll think of you as we're enjoying our delicious meal of tater tots and chicken fingers."

"Oh, I picked a great night to miss!" Callie laughed. "I'll talk to you later. Leaving for Connie's!"

"I watched my daughter put on her light jacket and head out the door. Her best friend lived in our development. The girls grew up doing everything together. I'm glad they had each other.

I couldn't stop the next thought from entering my mind. I wondered who would be my new daughter or son's best friend? I started to mentally go through the houses down each street in our development, trying to remember if any of them had little kids. I never imagined I would be looking for new friends with small children at the age of 51.

I somehow managed to get my quick-fix meal on the table without another tear. I'd forgotten how easy it was to cry when you were pregnant. But, never fear, my hormones were ready to alert me to any tendencies I might choose to forget. It seemed like, with each passing moment, I recalled some distant memory from years ago, or felt a feeling reminiscent of those early days of pregnancy.

"This chicken isn't bad," Brint said, reaching for his fourth piece. I looked down at my plate. Mine was still untouched. I played with my tater tots, hoping no one would notice I hadn't taken a bite of anything.

"Eat up!" I chirped. My plate in my hand, I made my move to the sink. My stomach was dancing the rumba. Just smelling the chicken still on the stove made me queasy.

"Aren't you hungry, Mom?" Ann's question sent my brain on another search for words.

"Oh, I was grazing on snacks all day." My twenty-one-year-old looked at me, satisfied with my answer. She handed me her plate on the way to her room. She was doing her student teaching this semester, her last major hurdle before she became a teacher herself. It seemed like her every minute was devoted to lesson plans and preparing for upcoming classes. I was so proud of her. I knew she would make an excellent teacher.

"I'll clean up," my hubby announced. "I'll knock these dishes out, then I've got to head back outside." He'd starting cleaning up the yard after the harsh winter we'd had. There was plenty that needed done.

"Thanks," I answered. "I have some school work to do. I'll be out in a little while to see if you need help."

"I'm good," he replied. "You go get your school stuff done."

I was happy for the get-away opportunity. I left the room and made a bee-line upstairs. I always had something from school to do. I loved my life as a teacher, but with it came an endless scroll of must-do's and a never-ending stack of papers, just waiting to be corrected. Yes, there was plenty to do, and I would eventually get done. But right now, all I wanted was my pillow and some alone time. I needed to get my head back on straight and prepare myself mentally for tomorrow's appointment with Dr. Curtis. The school work would have to wait.

I shut my eyes and allowed those feelings of apprehension to return. I spent my time calculating due-date possibilities and wondering when and if I'd ever be able to retire. I closed my eyes, praying everything would be better after a nap.

My plan was to take a fifteen-minute break, then languish in a hot shower. After that, I would tackle the three piles of social studies tests I'd brought home to check, then get to bed at a reasonable time. My mind would be too busy to stress over tomorrow's worries.

I should have known better. There was no nap. Instead, I fell asleep—soundly. I awoke a little after 11 pm, just as my husband was ready to crawl into bed. After my few hours of rest, I was wide awake and wishing it was time for school. I took my shower as everyone else climbed in bed.

My mind was racing. For the first time in weeks, I felt energized. Even my spirits seemed to be lifted. The tears were gone, replaced by positive thoughts for the future.

So you're going to have a baby, I chided myself. What's the big deal? You've had three before. And it's not like you're eighty! You're only 51! Plenty of older women are having babies these days! And Hunter? He would just have to get used to the idea. After all, I didn't get pregnant on purpose. He would know that this was a total fluke! Maybe even a gift from God! Maybe this little boy or girl would grow up to cure cancer or become the president! Where was my faith? God had a plan for me! I would accept the challenge he gave me and be the best mom possible!

My little pep talk worked. I fell asleep with excitement in my soul—going over baby names and the joys that came with a new little one. I hadn't slept so well in years.

My good mood lasted into the next day. Despite the fact that I threw up whenever I smelled the cafeteria's lunch, the day with my students was enjoyable. I looked at each one of them in a new light. I was going to be a mom to a little one again! Instead of dreading telling Hunter my news, I made a list of silly, little ways to tell him. Baby clothes in the laundry? Coupons for diapers left on the counter? A bottle of mint ginger ale in the refrigerator, the only thing that settled my stomach when I was pregnant

with our son? By the time my appointment came along, I was optimistic and ready to follow the regimen an 'older mom' would need to take on.



"So, this is a surprise!"

I took the doctor's words as a scolding.

"Yeah, a little," I lied.

"Well, babies aren't always planned," Dr. Curtis said. "It will take a little while for this to sink in, I'm sure." She paused. I nodded.

"Let's get the obvious questions answered first," she said, knowing I had to have dozens of things to ask her. "When is the first day of your last period? We'll get the due date and move on from there."

"Well," I said thinking back to that time in my life, "I am pretty sure it was February of 2009."

The doctor stopped typing notes and looked at me.

"You haven't had a period in over 3 years?"

I shook my head.

She flipped back through the folder she had in front of her. The quizzical look on her face made me a little nervous.

"Lisa, my records indicate you started through menopause around that time."

"I know," I answered quickly. "This is crazy. I never would have dreamed you could get pregnant after all that time. I thought I was done with menopause. I should have known better. There was no way I was lucky enough to get over this dreaded time so quickly. And now look where I'm at."

The look on my doctor's face was penetrating my entire being. Reality was kicking in. This pregnancy wasn't 'a fluke'. It was a little boy or girl forming inside of me. I had allowed myself to feel excitement and hope. Instead, I could be pregnant with a little one who would suffer with birth defects because of my ignorance and stupidity. This child may suffer its entire life due to me. I could feel a tear trickle down my left cheek. I was torn between crying and, dare-I-say, laughing, at the absurdity of it all.

"Dr. Curtis, this has really caught me off guard. My husband is gonna freak out," I said, leaning more on the side of crying now. "My older children might resent me. This whole thing has me. . .has me. . ."

My brief encounter with excitement had ended. The tears flowed freely now. My life was falling apart.

"I mean, am I too old to be a mom again? Is the baby going to be okay? I'm 51 years old! I know the chances of Down's Syndrome are higher, and there are other risks I'll have to be concerned about. And I know you are

going to hit me up with the suggestion of aborting. I don't even want to talk about that right now." Another round of tears took over.

"I'm rambling. I'm sorry," I said, reaching out for the tissue Dr. Curtis was offering. "I'm sure you should be the one doing the talking. You are the one with all the answers. I'm just going to be quiet and let you talk." I put my hand to my mouth, covering it like a little girl would when she wanted to silence herself.

"The doctor gave me a comforting smile.

"Lisa," she said, it's going to be okay. I've dealt with many women in your situation. They've all survived." It was meant to make me feel better. I tried. I tried very hard.

"When did you take your pregnancy test?"

Not this again!

"I haven't taken one," I said. "I know what it's like to be pregnant."

The look on Dr. Curtis's face was blank. She stood up and turned to the cupboard above the sink. She took a box from the stack in front of her and handed it to me.

"We'll talk when you're done."

I watched the woman walk out of the room. I wanted to be mad at her condescending actions. Instead, I read the directions on the box and followed through with the test. When the doctor next came in, I was sitting on the stool crying. The negative stick was on the counter.

"What's wrong with me?" I asked between sobs. "I should be thrilled I'm not pregnant. And here I sit, crying!"

Dr. Curtis gave me a professional's hug and sat down on the chair in the room. I dried my eyes and waited for her to speak. I felt like an idiot.

"Well, we've ruled out pregnancy. That's the good news. I think you're having some mixed emotions over this, and that's perfectly normal. You've been trying to convince yourself for days that a new baby would be a good thing. Now you're trying to change your feelings in an instant. You've got to give yourself a little time."

I nodded my head. She knew exactly where my thoughts were.

"I knew you being pregnant was a highly unlikely possibility. But stranger things have happened."

I let her words sink in. "I guess it was pretty silly of me to think I could be. But my hormones are so out of whack. And I do definitely feel the same way I did fourteen years ago when I had my last baby."

"There are all sorts of reasons for your hormones being out of whack. We'll do some blood work and find out your levels. Then we'll know where to start. In the meantime, get yourself calmed down, and, Lisa, enjoy life at 51."

I smiled. I took a deep breath and allowed myself to feel a little happiness at the news I'd received. Life was going to get back to normal. I could live with hot flashes and moodiness. I had blown this whole thing out of proportion. Pregnant at 51? Seriously? What was I thinking? I usually wasn't one to jump to conclusions! But that's exactly what I had done. I had acted stupidly through all this. Maybe my hormones were clouding my judgement. Maybe I just wasn't thinking very clearly. Either way, I needed to put this embarrassing scenario out of my mind and move on.

I walked out of the doctor's office with a positive mindset. I just needed to relax and get my head on straight. I had a lot on my plate. I was busy! I was middle-aged! I would have aches and pains and strange things going on with my body. I would have stress with three children and a full-time job. I just couldn't panic when weird little things came up.

Fortunately, my busy lifestyle and demanding work schedule didn't allow me to dwell on this pregnancy scare for long. It was March—a busy time for a teacher of 4th graders. Spring break was coming and I had plenty to keep my thoughts occupied. I needed to finish my unit on the early settlers and get the students prepared for the test. It was also getting nice out. Spring had arrived early. Evenings would be spent outside, cleaning up winter's harsh mess, and preparing for the flowers and gardening sure to come. Along with those busy measures, my own kids were involved in all kinds of activities. And my husband had just committed to turning our basement into the family room he'd always promised me. Yes, my life should have been getting back to normal. Every day I expected the anxiety to fade. I anticipated life with my stamina back, ready to take on the world. I longed for my sharp memory to return. I was torn between worrying myself sick over my symptoms, and trying to forget about them. Nothing seemed comfortable anymore.

There was one thing I was adamant about, though. I could not let my family or friends know about my health concerns. I hated when people went on and on about their insignificant problems, seeking sympathy for little ailments. I wasn't a complainer, by nature. I planned to keep it that way. Deep down I felt there was something wrong, but I wasn't willing to give into it either.

I did learn that planning out my days and staying on a schedule helped me cope, at least with my fatigue. Occasionally, though, I had to cheat and let the day take me where it may. Today was one of those days.



"Chocolate—small please." Callie's request was no surprise to me. My youngest daughter always got chocolate ice cream when we came to The

Milky Way. "Oh, I see the flavor for the week is teaberry," my mom said, hiding her smile. "I'll have a small cone of that."

"I never would have guessed," I laughed. My mom loved teaberry ice cream. In fact, that was the main reason we were here. A Sunday afternoon in the springtime—you couldn't get much better than this roadside shop. It was our destination of choice. A nice visit to Mom's wrapped up by a trip to an ice cream stand that I loved clear back in my childhood. This was exactly what I needed. The rough week was over, and it was time to get back to life as I knew it. I still had some nausea, and I was brutally tired, but I had to chock these symptoms up to hormone changes and my body starting to slow down after years of mothering and teaching. I was fine, I just needed to push any doubts to the back of my mind and motor on.

"And I'll have a medium vanilla." I could feel my daughter's eyes on me.

"A *medium*?" she asked. "What happened to your diet?"

I laughed off her comment and paid the girl at the window. We went to the nearest open picnic table in the shade and settled in to eat our treats. Ice cream was my weakness. I had worked here summers in high school. I could still remember how I congratulated myself each day I made it through without a cone. But my daughter was right. A small cone today would have been sufficient. Actually, I should have skipped the delightful treat altogether. My weight was up—not just by a pound or two, but by a good ten pounds. My usual lean self was having trouble squeezing into my loosest jeans. And shorts? I didn't even want to think about shorts. For some strange reason, I was continually ravenous. I never felt full anymore, and my guilt wasn't enough to stop me. Had I been pregnant, this scenario would have been expected. Instead, I was giving in to cravings for no reason. My willpower seemed to be gone.

We downed our ice creams quickly. This 80 degree spring day was a little unusual in Pennsylvania, but welcomed by most after a cold and particularly nasty winter. Ice cream wasn't going to last long in this weather!

We talked to several people we knew while we sat enjoying the day. As a teacher, I was always off weekends. But usually I was too busy with my own kids and errands to spend an entire day doing nothing. I decided this was going to be one of those days.

I watched as my mother, newly retired from 43 years as a nurse, talked softly to one of her neighbors. She was no doubt giving her friend some advice. That was my mom's specialty. She always had an open ear for anyone, and she always gave the best suggestions for any problem that would come up. She was such a strong woman! My dad died of a stroke when I was only nine. My mom was left with 5 children under the age of eleven to raise on her own. She was so dependent on my dad that she didn't even know how

to drive when he passed away! She called the driver's ed. teacher at the high school to give her lessons! Thank goodness she had her nursing degree and got hired right away at a nearby hospital. I can't imagine how awful that would have been for her. But somehow, Mom did it. We were lacking in money, but never in love. We were a close-knit family, struggling through some really tough times. But it's funny how they don't stand out in my mind now. All I can remember are the happy ones.

I hoped that I would always be the mom to my kids that she was to us. I had three wonderful children, and a husband around all the time. My times weren't rough at all in comparison to hers. So when I did have a stressful day along the way, I would remember my mom and her strength. A phone call to her usually got me right back on track.

And I was every bit as pleased with my own kids as she was of hers. I attributed it to my husband and I being actively involved in our children's lives. Well, that, along with a little luck. Yes, you had to deal with what you were dealt in life. I grew up learning that. But being there for your kids was a gift no one else could give. As a teacher, I'd worked with children from all kinds of families. Some of the happiest kids I'd ever met were from the poorest of homes. Their pride in family kept them going. Their riches were in warmth and love.

We sat so long at the picnic table just talking to friends and some of my former students, that I was ready to order another cone. Instead, I convinced my mom it was time to leave. I ignored the little voice in my head reminding me I was growing tired. Instead, I took my mom back to her house and dropped her off. She laughed as she got out and told me she had enjoyed herself so much at the Milky Way, she was going inside to get her car keys, then drive right back. I was happy for her. My energy level paled to hers.

"You go, girl!" Callie teased as she waved goodbye to Grammy. I tooted the horn and we started the half-hour journey home.

Callie and I talked about the day and both agreed it had been a relaxing afternoon. My daughter then busied herself on her phone, leaving me to my think about dinner. I called my husband, hoping he would find the idea of eating take-out a good option.

"Too late for that!" he said cheerfully. "I already have burgers on the grill, a salad made, and a pan of brownies in the oven. We'll eat when you get here."

I smiled. *That* was why I loved this man! He was considerate and always thinking of ways to make life easier for me and the kids. The thought of hamburgers on the patio put my mind in a happy place. I secretly hoped he put two burgers on for me.

I let my mind drift to tomorrow. It would be the start of another busy week. I didn't mind, though. In fact, I preferred it. I wanted to be productive and inspirational to the students I taught. The need to teach was inborn in me, as much as my blue eyes and blonde hair. I taught for 8 years before Hunter and I started a family. I considered every one of those little ones in my class each year my own. I missed them in the evenings, and worried about them over the weekends. I tried to be their daytime 'mom away from home.' That's how I wanted my own children to be treated in their schools—to feel safe, happy and loved.

And now, after working more than 30 years, I still had the same zest for teaching I had when I started. Of course, I didn't have the same energy as I did at 22, but who does? Everyone slows down as they age. It was my passion for the job that kept me going. Teaching for me was like breathing, eating, or sleeping. It gave me the fuel I needed to change lives and make a difference. I just needed to take care of myself and my love for the job would do the rest.

The remainder of the day progressed as it had started. I was content. I had convinced myself that any little thing that bothered me, was due to fluctuating hormones. My bloodwork result would show that. Everything was going to be fine. I would start feeling better soon. I just knew it.

And an uneventful weekend had been just what I needed. With three kids, that didn't often happen. Someone always had to be somewhere, or my days off were filled with laundry and cooking and catching up on schoolwork I didn't have time for through the week. This little break was needed!

When I finally crawled into bed that night, I mentally checked-off each child in my mind. Callie was already asleep. She had spent her evening studying for an algebra test she has been dreading for days. I made note of that fact and wanted to remember to wish her good luck in the morning. Brint, was still out. He was watching a baseball game with a buddy and didn't have a class until 10 tomorrow. I was glad he was having a good evening, but I knew I wouldn't soundly sleep until I heard him pull in the driveway. Please don't go into extra innings, I jested to myself. And then there was Ann. She was still awake in her room, cutting out paper squares and reviewing essays from Friday. But I could hear her softly singing along to her music. Yes, she was in a happy place too. My children were all noted and accounted for.

My husband had gone to bed a half hour before me and was sleeping soundly. These few minutes, as infrequently as they came, were always blissful to me. I knew where everyone was and I had no one to worry about. I could let my mind roam without interruptions. Tonight, I thought about my mom and my family and how I was living the life I'd always imagined—even better! Not only was I a teacher with a wonderful family, I had achieved a

goal I'd dreamed about since I was six years old. I was a writer—an actual author with books published! My first was a parenting guide for parents of preschool children. Being a teacher and a mom, this book of advice and activities came naturally to me. My second book was an adult fiction whodunnit. From there I went on to write several children's books. Of course, I wasn't famous, nor was I making enough money to quit my day job. But the feeling of putting down words that someone else would actually want to read was thrilling. Granted, I was teaching full-time and raising my kids in the midst of it, but I tried to find time every day to work on my 'projects'. My husband dubbed my minutes in front of the computer as my therapy time. He was right. Writing had always given me a rush that nothing else could, second only to teaching. Mixing my two loves together made for some wonderful stories. Earning a little extra on the side was just a bonus. Of course, I aspired to be on the Best Seller's List, but for now, this 'hobby' pleased a part of my soul with just the right warmth.

I spent my remaining minutes awake thinking about tomorrow's school day, my students, and the active week I had ahead. I fell asleep, content with my life the way it was.



The next morning, I woke with a splitting headache. My joints ached and I felt lousy all over. Hormones, I reminded myself. Hormones. I thought of calling in sick, but remembered, through the fog and pain in my head, it was the day my fourth graders were starting their history projects. That's not a job I would leave for any substitute to tackle. I dragged myself from the covers to the closet to the bathroom. My energy was beyond low. I even fell once! I sent up a silent prayer of thanks that I didn't get hurt. I lent an ear to the rest of the family, hoping they were all awake and moving about. As far as I could tell, it was just another normal morning for them. That's just the way I liked it—normal. I hoped that for myself today, right after I got rid of this headache.

My aches and pains did fade throughout the hours—probably because I had no time to acknowledge them. They melted into the back of my mind, overtaken by popsicle stick forts, essays on log cabin life, and every pioneer tool imaginable, from butter churns to anvils. I typically love these kinds of days as a teacher. I become one of the children—excited, inquisitive. My classroom becomes a museum of replicas and reports. All the students have something to offer.

But the throbbing in my head got my sole attention again by the end of the day.

"Mrs. Church, Jason is taking all the glue!"