

# A Blessed Life but a Heavy Burden

Category: Abortion: Then and Now

written by Jessica Taylor Goldstein | July 15, 2022

I am sad because I never knew my father, my half sisters, or my half brothers. I never knew half my culture, language, or country. So people see only half of who I am.

And, honestly, I never knew my other half either, as my mom was mentally ill and couldn't tell me who she was or what I came from on her side.

Now here I am, lost, myself the mother of three daughters who look to me for direction—but I can't give them any perspective. I can tell them only that they are American girls, like the title of the Tom Petty song.

They are a mix of me and him, with a way better life than I ever imagined possible. I hope for so much more for them. I look back and kiss the earth, for where I am now once seemed impossible. For my girls, I hope for freedom of choice, freedom of path, freedom of independence, and freedom of reproduction.

Says me, a woman who appreciates the right to reproductive freedom, who grants it to others, and who feels like an imposter in so many ways but who also feels thankful that I am here to fight for those who have trod similar paths, now and as long as I live.

I feel blessed to be able to share this reflection as one of my daughters, who shares my mom's birthday, turns 12; as I look back on the nearly 20 years that have passed since my mom was reclaimed by the earth; as I look forward to the rest of my career as a family physician and provider of reproductive and maternal health care in New Mexico.

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