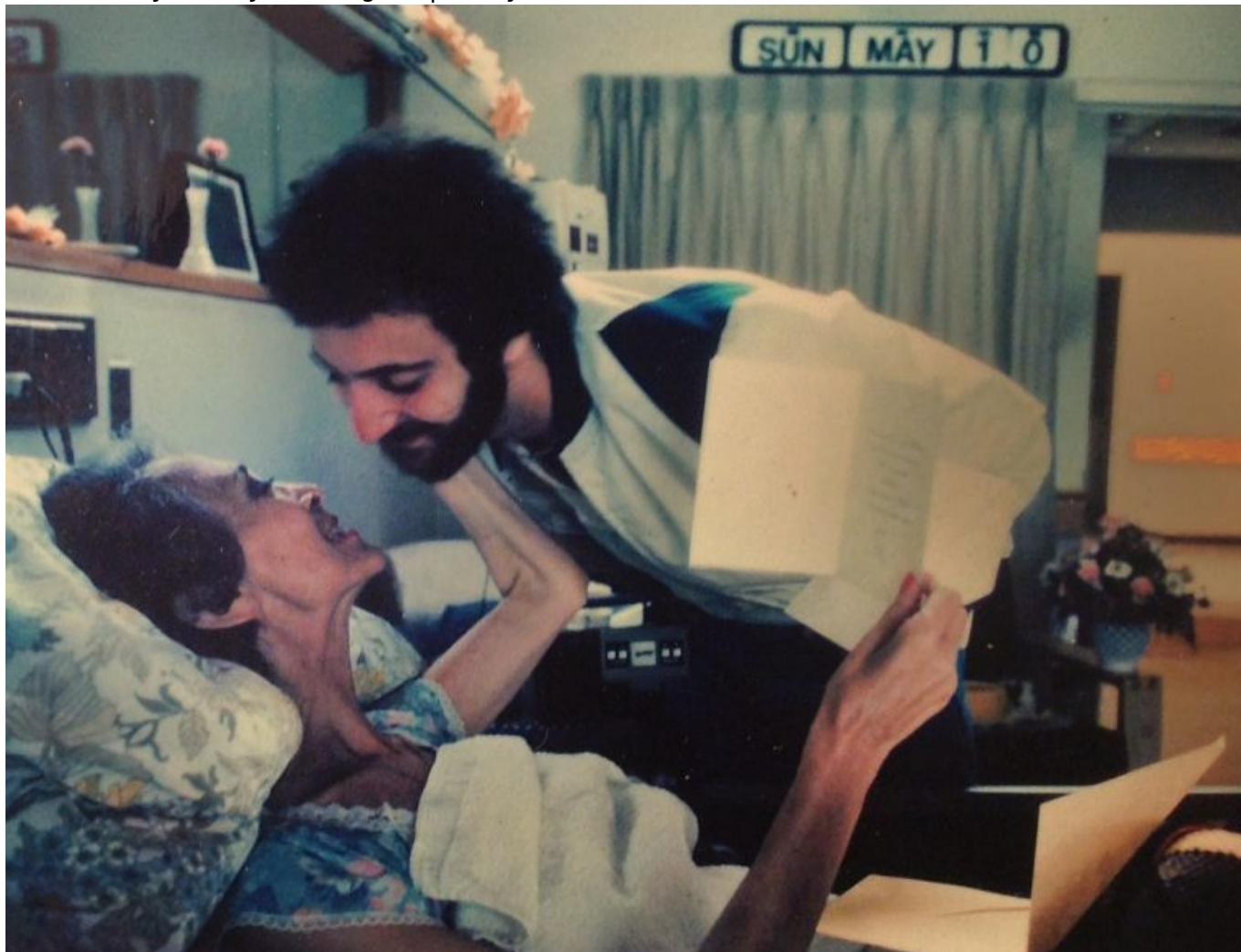


# A Last Mother's Day

Category: visuals

written by Terry Hourigan | July 25, 2014



## **Terry Hourigan**

### **About the artist:**

"I'm a father, nurse, writer and humor lover. After my mom's death in 1983, I became a hospice volunteer and then decided to go into medical service, leaving a photo career to do so. I went briefly into the NYC emergency medical service, then attended nursing school and went into AIDS and cancer home care and hospice work. It's been twenty years now, interrupted in 2011 by colon cancer; the chemo rooms gave me some 'no escape' time in which I found that I could write."

### **About the artwork:**

"I met Bernie Siegel in my former photojournalism career. Asked about hospice, he sent me to meet his patient Sonny (pictured with her son, above, at the Branford inpatient facility). 'Sonny was one special lady,' he told me. He described how she asked a friend why he was hanging around with her instead of out having fun. He answered, 'You have touched me, and I have grown.'"

“When I was diagnosed with cancer, Bernie shared his insights. On treatment decisions: ‘Statistics can help you decide, but your potential is another factor.’ On chemotherapy: ‘When the nasty stuff comes up, erase the blackboard by visualizing something you love...don’t be afraid to make rules for yourself and your care...and laugh for no reason.’ On my newfound empathy for patients: ‘I call that native vs. tourist.’ On reticent patients: ‘I walk into their rooms with a cane and a limp – we are all wounded, and when you reveal your wounds, others share with you things they normally would keep hidden.’”

**Visuals editor:**

Justin Sanders