

Excerpts from...

A Breath of Fresh Air (with shrapnel):

A very personal, quasi-fictional collection of whimsically brutal memoirs from (this human's) search, healing, growth, and redemption.

By: Alisa Dale

From “Publishable Autobiography”

Born in 1960, my "official" (family approved) childhood story is an uneventful but touching—ho-hum suburbs, pretty girl, good student, upstanding family, involved in church and community—story. (Rent any sweet movie about family life in the 1970's for further detail.) All boo-boos were neatly hidden under clever Band-aids, preferably the ones decorated with soft, cuddly animals for private, public viewing.

My adult life story reads something like a bad novel. While teaching school in Texas I eloped with an illegal alien from Europe, quit my much loved job, my family, most of my friends, some of my church and unsettled into the routineless life of a battered wife.

Upon my return to Minnesota and a long-distance divorce later, unwed, I graced the world with a new little being at age thirty-one. Somehow charming a wonderful attorney, I was married, graced the world with another little being at age thirty-seven, and externally settled into the routine life of a suburban soccer mom whose passion for her work (teaching, education and writing) became a hobby subordinate to hubby: a side dish to the meat of raising a family, medium well...

From “Bad Fit”

...Come to think of it, about a year ago my mom gave me an article cut out of a magazine. (Articles cut out of various magazines and newspapers was a favorite way to communicate with us, especially if the subject matter was really difficult or taboo. "Dear Abby" columns always came in handy in those instances where telling the simple truth about something was just too threatening. That way, advice given by a stranger to another stranger who happened to be facing a different but similar dilemma nicely took care of the problem. Plus, it erased any need for deeper investigation, awkward questions, or messy dialogue.)...

From “Burying Myself”

...Outside, the clear moonlight glistened off wet grass blades, sawed straight on top, made uniform by the day's mowing... A most familiar tree looked frightfully lonely standing in the middle of the groomed, rectangle lawn, alone, ringed in landscaping bricks...

She stole into a small grouping of lilac bushes... And she began digging. When the hole in the earth appeared broad and deep enough to cradle the box, she opened it slowly. It was empty. Now for the business of filling it. Carefully, gently, that little girl, all alone in the thick of night, poured her soul into that box, like hot steamy chocolate: rich, flavorful, warm and sweet. She kept for herself only the marshmallows, everyone's favorite part...

From “Flush After Your New Age Movement”

...I had devoted twenty years to my own personal dream: finding sanity. Call it "inner peace" call it "the truth" call it "God realization" call it "being able to pay your bills on time." Call it whatever you will. I know I did over the years.

And I worked hard. I spent a fortune. Hundreds of books, healers, crystals, workshops, psychic readings, tithing, rhythmic breathing, meditating, Native drumming, emoting, fasting, device wearing, praying, affirming, magnet sleeping, juice drinking, more psychic readings, positive thinking, Rolfing, holding hands and Harmonic Convergencing, long distance energy clearing, more affirming, massaging, rebirthing, book and tape buying, talking, networking, sharing, crying. I devoured whatever I saw or heard about that might possibly hold clues to my illusive prize....

From “Meeting JG”

"Look, you need to know something. You're my last stop. You're it. Honest to God, if you can't help me, I'm going to kill myself. I'm giving you a year."

Not a ripple of emotion crosses any part of him, least of all his face.

"Seems pretty straightforward to me."

"I thought you should know."

"Looks like we're here to work, then."

"Yeah, work."

"Good. That's good."

More strained silence. Apparently this guy has no idea how to keep a conversation going.

"You seem kinda pissed."

"Kinda?"

"What are you pissed about?"

"Look, let's just cut this whole thing short and examine what I'm *not* pissed about. I'm on a limited income."...

From “From Yearning to Realization”

For twenty-four years I read, studied, attended workshops, went to healers and spent hours in meditation. I know high states of consciousness exist: I experienced them. But I could never bring those states into everyday life and sustain them, moment to moment, day to day. I had my "spiritual" life and my "waking consciousness."

This split was highly dissatisfactory...

...Somewhere we know we are truly Divine. Yet we villainize those things in us that don't feel "spiritual" or "nice." What I came to know is that nothing "out there" can heal us until we turn inward and honor every aspect of ourselves—the confused, the alienated, and the wounded as well as the pure, the loving, and the healed—and consciously sit with them in the presence of the Sacred. Thus we are transformed....

From “Still Human After All These Years”

...Funny. I spent so many years trying to get out of my life, trying to get better, trying to make it better. Fighting causes. Cursing the darkness. Hating being here, suffering miserably. And I come to find out that what I was actually doing was looking for a way to be fully here. Who Knew?

I guess I just thought by golly, if I get healed enough, clear enough, spiritually awakened enough... well, I'm not real sure what I thought exactly. Maybe that being in a human body wouldn't be so hard....

From “Cause”

We are here. And it's for a reason.
The yearnings inside our hearts are of a season.

Wake up.
Let's face the bars in our self-perpetuating prisons.

We stand on the shoulders of giants
who wielding machetes through the shadows
cleared the path for our full freedom.
Fear is the gateway. That's why we've been conditioned to avoid it.
At the fork where the sign says "comfort" or "fear," boldly choose fear.
On that horizon awaits your freedom...