

Frontotemporal Dementia Pantoum: My Mother's Keeper

Lealani Mae Y. Acosta,
MD

Correspondence to
Dr. Acosta:
lealani.mae.acosta@vanderbilt.edu

I am my mother's daughter, though I was loathe to admit it as a child.
I couldn't help but take after her.
It's written in my genes,
but I am also my own person.

I couldn't help but take after her.
I liked clomping around in her shoes, clutching my Barbies.
But I was also my own person.
Acting out. Candy wrappers strewn on my bedroom floor.

I liked clomping around in her shoes, clutching my Barbies
when I was little, but ignored her parentage as a teen.
Acting out. Candy wrappers strewn on my bedroom floor.
She'd just shake her head and smile

when I was little and ignored my rebellion as a teen.
She was always the sensible one: aggravating, but sensible.
She'd just shake her head and smile
at my antics, nodding knowingly.

She was always the sensible one: aggravating, but sensible,
cautioning me not to spend all my allowance
on my antics. Nodding knowingly,
she miraculously transformed from annoying tyrant to wise guide.

Cautioning me not to spend all my allowance
as I aged,
she miraculously transformed from annoying tyrant to wise guide,
then the annoying tyrant transformed.

As I aged,
she became the spoiled child.
The annoying tyrant transformed.
Unwashed dishes piled next to \$1200 worth of QVC porcelain dolls.

She became a spoiled child,
Resisting dressing. Ignoring house cleaning.
Unwashed dishes piled next to \$1200 worth of QVC porcelain dolls.
The same woman who now refused to shower QOD was

Resisting dressing. Ignoring house cleaning.
I took her to her doctor.
The same woman who now refused to shower QOD was
countering my concern with stubborn resistance. Nothing was wrong.

I took her to her doctor.
That doctor sent us to another doctor. A neurologist now
countenanced my concern with stubborn insistence. Something was wrong:
frontotemporal dementia.

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That doctor sent us to another doctor. A neurologist
sent genetic testing for
frontotemporal dementia.
FTDP-17 (MAPT) positive. Sterile, precise gobbledygook.

Sending genetic testing for
this disease was something I didn't even know existed.
FTDP-17 (MAPT) positive. Sterile, precise gobbledygook.
Where did that leave me?

This disease was something I didn't even know existed.
Foreknowledge is foresorrow.
Where does this leave me?
I am my mother's keeper.

Foreknowledge is foresorrow.
Is it written in my genes?
Am I my mother's keeper?
I am my mother's daughter, though I am loathe to admit it as her child.

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