

March 7, 2020

I am very sad to tell you of the passing of my mother Sallie Ann Yarbrough Mostafavi Rejali on March 7, 2020 in Benalmadena, Spain. She passed away in her sleep and was resting peacefully after a difficult previous day. Like my father, she passed away at dawn, between 6 and 8. She passed away about ten hours after the jinaza prayer and burial of my father here in Portland, and 17 days after his passing. My sister and I were in Portland for the burial and my brother was in London and had been in regular contact with her. People remembered her here and asked me to pass their condolences, but I guess they will be delivered by other means. People she loved were with her at the end, and they took good care of her.

This is a terrible blow to our family, to lose both our elders so quickly in time, and we must now manage these burdens together. We know that we are in your thoughts, and if you are able to help, you will.

My plans in Portland remain unchanged, however much my grief has grown. Sunday, from 1-5 pm I will be receiving at my home. Three days later, I expect to leave for London, and spend time with my brother's family and recover more of myself. It is now time to take care of myself and it will take a while. And then I am returning to Spain to wrap up my parents affairs and bring back her ashes to the US. There will be a Portland memorial, in June as planned.

Spanish friends, we still plan to have a memorial sometime between March 18 and March 30, and now for both our parents. That said, it most likely will be pushed forward so other family members can attend from the Middle East and US can come as well. I will keep you posted.

A few more thoughts about my mother and her last days.

My mother loved mountains, which is why she loved Iran, but she especially loved the Caspian, where the mountains met the sea. And our second home in Malaga always brought her back to what she loved most, where the mountains met the sea. She said once that she wanted to be remembered looking out to the sea, a slim girl wondering what was out there framed in the sea-light. She always wanted to see all the places she never saw, above them all Kyoto, something I had hoped to give her in time, but it was not to be.

Mom also loved the community of Iranian women to which she belonged in Iran, and was full of stories of them. In Spain, at the end, she found a community of caregivers that truly adored her. Jeannie, Heidi, Dori who kept the corner shop, her oncologist Dr. Rebeca Alcalde, they all loved her and cared for her. On Wednesday Jeannie took her out in a taxi to lunch in the Marina in Benalmadena and she sat indoors and she was once again near the sea. She ate a burger and desert. This was her last meal. Thursday she didn't feel well and Jeannie was with her all day – and by day's end she was feeling more pain but in areas not related to her cancer. Friday Jeannie held her hand all day long, much as Mom always wished. At the end of the day, my friend John visited she was comfortable and conscious. She was having respiratory problems and they had put her in an oxygen set up, and that helped her sleep.

When I left her, she understood why I had to go back to the states, to bring back dad's ashes and bury them so she could start the process of grieving for him. She said that she wanted the process of mourning for him to be over. And I did as she wished and said I would be back for her. But I didn't I think understand what she meant by the process being over. She always made her own plans and traveled in her own way – however much she was embedded and a deep part of a Persian family. I am and will always be ...Sallie's child. I will always be wild like she is. She was.

Life often did not turn out as she planned, but she always grasped the fundamentals. I did not always succeed in caring for her, as I cared for my father. And sometimes, moments like this, oceans and continents away, I wonder what more I could have done. We can never overcome I think the things that make us who we are – our needs, our desires, our cares and concerns seem overwhelming to us sometimes and we may ignore the cares and needs of others – and our tragedy is to know that this can never change. But it's part of our lives to strive at every moment, exercising every virtue we know to overcome it, and our glory is that occasionally we get it right. At the end of their lives, I came to love donkeys for their gentleness and broad shoulders, how they bore the world patiently despite the burdens they bore, and how they left the world when they were ready. Gentleness as a friend of mine said, is a virtue not often valued compared to

things like courage. And donkeys imitate the earth, bearing all things good and ill with prevalence and forbearance.

My parents were always like the straits of Gibraltar, and I could never see my life beyond their lives, though I knew my boat was drifting inexorably towards the open ocean in the night past those tall rocks. I find myself thinking, and pardon the non sequitur, that my father loved trees and he was buried next to a great Douglas fir, to whom he will say "hello old man" . He was in a way a forest, and my mother an ocean – each deep and wide and impossible to ponder and cross – and I am quite different, probably a tall mountain capped with snow, between the forests and the sea.

Thanks you for reading all this.

Darius