

BODY SNATCHERS NUMBER THREE

By: Bonnie Harlan

How is this possible? This many people coming to say "I'm sorry", "Sorry for your loss." "I have no words".

It was the five of us at home with her as her young, vibrant body drifted daily towards frail, shrinking expiration. God dam Doctors at Sloan-Kettering fucking hospital. She knew, she knew – they were using her as an experiment- she knew. "I won't go back," she said. I'm the one who couldn't deal with it. "Let me go" she said. "Can I go now?" "Please, I'll be fine." "I want you to be OK with this." "How are you doing?"

So young and beautiful, how can this be? How is it she understood it and I don't? Oh, God, here comes my mother now, having lost 2 grandchildren – one to suicide one to cancer. What the hell will I say to her?

"John, thank you for coming – she loved you so- the prom with you was the highlight of her junior year – did you see the photo of the two of you?" It must be so hard on these kids. "It's OK to cry honey"."OK" "OK"

It's not OK. Really. It's not. I am numb – like a Zombie –numb – I see myself hugging, kissing, and crying with wave after wave of faces, bodies, and voices. Relatives, co-workers, her classmates. I'd much rather be at a bar drinking pitchers of beer and celebrating her birthday with these people, not her death. "I've had a great 25 years." 25 years? She wasn't even started.

"Mom, can I go now? I am in so much pain – hold my hand – it will be tonight – I love you all". I hear myself repeat these last words of hers to comfort others. My heart aches for her fiancé – he looks so lost."

There's my seven month old grandson – is he the symbol of life going on? Oh God, Oh God, Oh God – four fucking months from diagnosis to this.

Rene, your suffering is over, ours is just beginning.