



# Hoping

Poems from the life of a young survivor

By Jennifer, age 14

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And I'm hoping  
I'll always remember . . .

Jennifer,

Your life is a miracle. The horrors you suffered at the hands of those you trusted most is incomprehensible. Still, you have the courage to keep on hoping.

As you try out new methods of communicating, you are finding many that just don't work. But don't give up, your life is worth the effort to learn what you still need to learn. Keep hoping, and remember that God's plan for us far surpasses anything we ever dare to wish for ourselves.

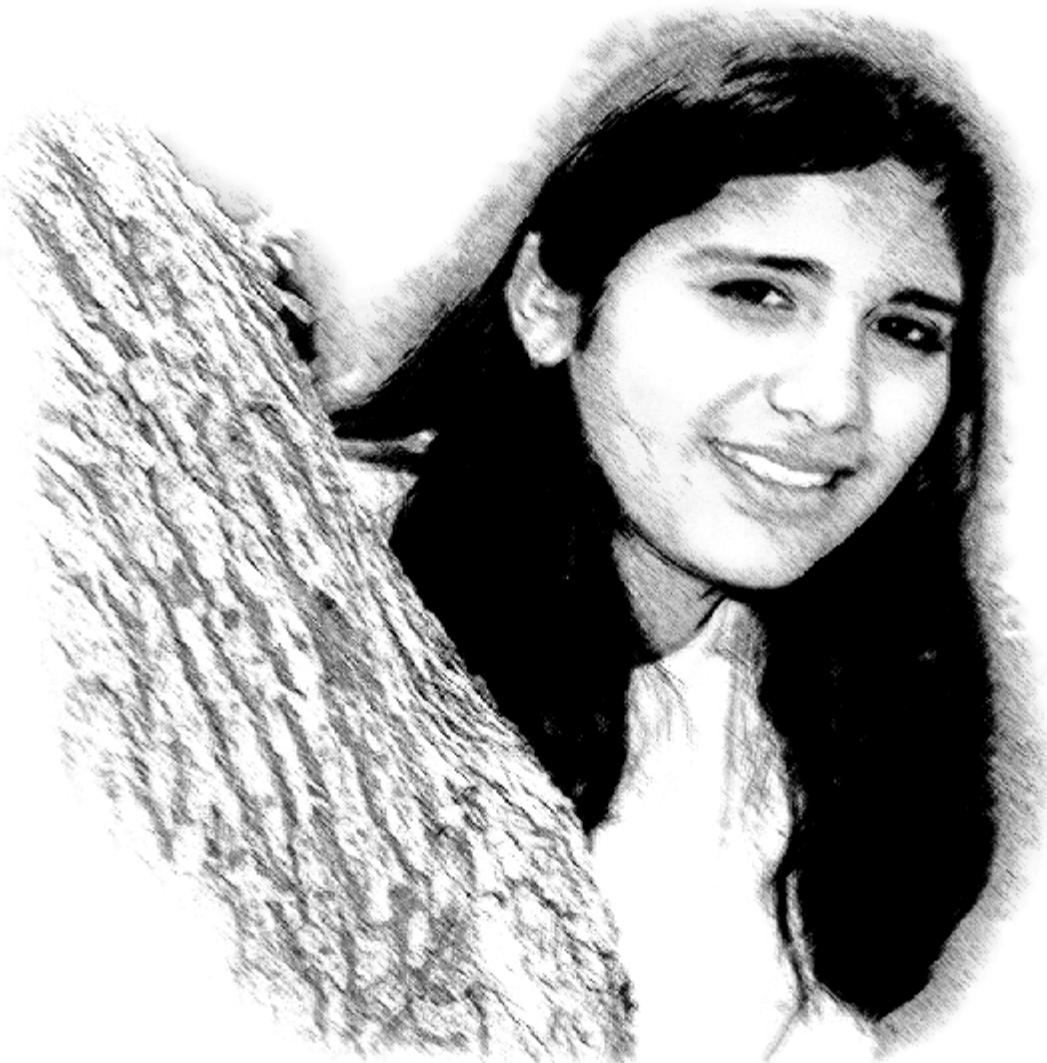
*Carol Priour*

HCYR Fine Arts Director



And I will tell my children  
over and over again  
that I love them. . .  
So they will never have to wonder. . .

I'll be a country singer. . .



# Hoping

Jennifer Crabtree

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I'm dreaming I will be a mother  
and have two children;  
a boy and a girl. . .





*Mom and Dad*

a big, tan, two-story house . . .

## Angie

Angie was so tiny . . .  
My newborn sister.

I don't know why  
She cried and cried that night.

Daddy yelled at Mama  
That if she didn't shut her up  
Then he would.

Angie kept on crying.

Daddy took her to the bathroom  
And put her tiny head  
In hot water.

## She Mattered to Me

Daddy treated Grandma  
Like she didn't matter.


But she mattered to me.

Sometimes when they would leave us alone  
For a long time  
She would come over  
And help me take care of the other kids.

He pushed her and hurt her.

It made me so sad.  
I thought he was the reason she died.

And I hope in heaven she remembers  
That she mattered to me.



I'm dreaming of a home someday . . .



## **We Wanted to Be Like Her**

Mama was out drinking one night  
Probably with her boyfriend.

We wanted to be like her,  
My sister and I.

We put on her makeup  
And thought we looked so pretty.

We wanted to be like her.

When she came home  
And saw us  
She burned us with her curling iron.

I don't know why  
But we still wanted to be like her.

## **Helpless**

I don't know why  
Mama had to hit the baby  
She was too little  
To do anything wrong.  
She was so helpless.

I felt helpless, too  
Because  
I couldn't help the baby.



## Sometimes

Before the state took us  
When I was seven,  
Mark was four,  
Mercedes was three,  
Cassie was one,  
And Angie was a baby . . .

Before then,  
They left us at home alone a lot . . .  
Sometimes for days.

I was the oldest,  
So I took care of everyone.

Sometimes I had to go ask the neighbors for food.  
Sometimes I didn't go to school.  
Sometimes I was tired.  
Sometimes I was scared.

Sometimes I didn't know what to do.

# Hoping

## Depression

I don't want to  
Be depressed all the time.  
I just don't know how to  
Get it to stop.

## Hoping

I didn't get to say "good-bye".  
When she left, she never came back for us.

I'm hoping she knew Jesus:  
I think maybe she did.  
After she would beat us  
She would sit down in the chair and cry.  
It was like she never wanted to do the things she did.

Then she was quiet.  
Maybe she was praying.

And if she does know Jesus,  
I'm hoping He will  
Stop her from doing drugs and drinking.

I'm hoping I will see her again someday,  
And the drugs and drinking will be gone.  
I'm hoping she will be glad to see me.

I'm hoping.

## Why Mama, Why?

Mama, why did you leave me?  
Why did you never tell me that you loved me?  
Why did you leave me with him?  
He beat me . . . and *worse*.

All the pain  
All the sorrow  
And anger  
Have grown inside of me.  
I want to let it all out,  
But I don't know *how*.

I cry myself to sleep.

## **Mama, I Still Love You**

Mama, I still love you  
Even though you drank too much  
And beat me  
And did drugs  
And left Daddy for your new boyfriend.

None of those things  
Can take away the love I have for my mama.

The drug overdoses  
Really scared me.

The beatings  
Made me feel  
Like no one loved me.

But you are still my mama, and I still love you.

## **Adoption**

Why is there even adoption  
when all it does is give us brutalization?  
We may cry and whine,  
But deep inside we know it will never "be just fine"

And as the years go by,  
we all wonder why.  
Why did we have such hopes for this adoption,  
When all it would bring would be brutalization?

## **I Thought**

There were 21 kids in that house;  
Boys in one room, girls in the other.

It didn't seem like  
They adopted us because they  
Really wanted us;  
They were so unhappy.

I thought adoption would be better.  
I thought  
I would be happy.

# *The Foster Home*

## Grandmother

My father is in jail.  
No one I know knows where my Mama is.  
When I was seven and in the first grade  
The "new father" at the foster home  
Did things to me  
That make it hard to trust anyone anymore.

My grandmother,  
She was good.

When she was alive I always knew  
That someone loved me.  
When I need her, I have her in my heart.  
I need her now.

# Adoption

*We' excited.  
There's a family  
that wants all of us!  
Maybe I can have my own room.  
Probably not.  
That's ok.  
I'm excited!*

## **Alone**

I remember the first night.  
I remember the exact time . . .  
There were many times after that.

I remember the days alone.

Why did you do it?

You hurt me.

You left a scar in my heart-

You can't even see it,

But it will always be there.

Why did you rape me?

Didn't you see

I was only seven?

Alone . . .alone . . .alone.



## **I Didn't Tell**

I didn't tell  
Anyone  
For a very long time . . .  
What he did to me at the foster home.  
(Not until  
After we moved  
To another place.)

Who would want to hear?  
Would they believe him or me?  
Would he hurt me for telling?

I guess everyone thought I wasn't grateful  
When I wanted to leave.

I hope I get adopted.

## **I Know**

God,  
All I want  
Is to be happy  
And have a family,

I know  
My parents gave me up.  
Maybe that was for the best.  
I wondered if my dad was so sick  
Because of me.  
I don't know.

## **My Dream**

I dreamed about adoption  
For a long time . . .  
Hoping someone would choose me  
And my brother and sisters, too.

"Maybe", they told me.  
"If you can be good enough"