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Writing

A Summary of “On Being A Cripple”

Nancy Mairs, a writer who had suffered from MS (Multiple Sclerosis) since the age of 28, wrote the essay “On Being A Cripple,” which is about her life journey with the disease.

Nancy defines the terms to interact with society (what do you mean?) at the beginning of the essay. Instead of “handicapped” or “disabled,” the mild words, she names herself a cripple, a clean and precise term which accurately describes her condition: she had lost the full use of her limbs. The term contains the honorable history though people may wince at it— it is Nancy’s purpose— she wants people to wince. She wants them to see her as a tough customer who faces the brutal truth (of her disease???). The words like “handicapped,” “disabled,” or “differently abled” are unsuitable for her because they fail to explain her condition specifically and widen the gap between word and reality, describing no one because "Society is no readier to accept crippledness than to accept death, war, sweat, or wrinkles.”, ~~it~~ which is also the reason that she will not call others cripples.

She limns the glorious days before she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. There were lots of things she could do easily— just as an ordinary person, ~~but not a cripple,~~ like climbing trees, jumping rope, skating~~….~~ . . . . Her ability to do these things, her control of body, her sight of one eye, her ordinary and joyful life~~….~~ . . . . All of these were ~~took~~ taken away by the brain tumor, and everything went worse, her ~~illness, either~~ health too. Struggling ~~in~~ against the misfortune which was brought by MS, she continued studying, teaching, accompanying her child, and also learned to appreciate the warmth from others.

However, sometimes she still suspects people and her family. Though they treat her as if she were ~~the~~ normal, she thinks it is all ~~pretended~~ fake, and the kindness of others is just a shame, a curious pity, reminding her of the saying: “because you are a cripple.” —It is the scary part of the disease: the disease draws away patients’ attention from others to ~~only focus on~~ it, grasping their heads so that they ~~to~~ face to it, forcing them to stare at it, separating patients ~~and~~ from people who are around them, until it wear~~ing~~s away all ~~o~~f love and consideration. Her selfish thinking was ~~comforted~~ changed by her mother. “We all have to make allowance for you, of course, because of the way you are~~.~~,” her mother said. After that, she faces her disease frankly.

Nancy also talks about the general expectations for women. Because of the disease, she is doomed to fail to correspond with the characteristics (confusing, characteristics of what???)— but it is not her fault, she hates the disease, not herself.

“My life is a lesson in losses” she says, being grateful to the disease which teaches her to treasure what she ha~~d~~s, and always be proud of who she is— who can face the brutal truth squarely.

“As a cripple, I swagger.” sa~~id~~ys Nancy.

1. The content is good, but revisions are necessary, as there are so many mistakes.
2. 75-5, late