



Tyla A. Thibodeau Theriault
May 17, 1962 – April 14, 2015

Once upon a time – in a very pretty house – on a very pretty street – there lived a very pretty girl.

I met Tyla when we were barely 7 years old. We started out as neighborhood friends and classmates – and over the course of over 46 years – we became sisters at heart – and the very best friends. Tyla was one of the brightest lights in my life and I can't imagine my life without her.

As a young girl – Tyla was always the best dressed. From her Partridge Family velvet suit in 4th grade to her Wedgewood and cream Gunne Sax gown for 8th grade graduation, most likely from her favorite store, Pattie-Anne's, to her Vaccaros, chinos, monogrammed sweaters and matching Bermuda bags in every color – she was always a stunner. She loved her bling, anything gold and her monograms, which adorned her clothes, her accessories and even her cars. There was nothing subtle about her – and we loved her for that. In her eyes, green was not merely green, it was sea foam green – as she celebrated everything for its magnificence, and even simple colors were amplified to a level of royalty. The world was beautiful in her eyes, and we were blessed to share her vision.

Our blonde beauty was a strong, athletic girl – from figure skating to track and field to any sport. She excelled at the high jump and shot put and was a Northeast Conference Record Holder and All Star. When she would skate to Cabaret or Mame – my favorite move was her Russian split jump. She would leave the ice and touch the tips of her skates to her outstretched hands – high above the sideboards – flying fast through the air. And while she was strong, she always carried herself with elegance and grace.

Skating was Tyla's first love. We watched her compete in many competitions – and win countless medals and trophies that adorned the den walls long before Lenyx's prizes took their place. She skated throughout her life – and then taught Lenyx and many others how to skate. She helped Direct the Annual Viking Skating Shows each year, where she and Lenyx would perform together. She started a skating program at Salve Regina. We also loved to attend live skating shows and we got to see many of the stars and even met quite a few, including Dr. Tenley Albright, her idol, who was an Olympic Figure Skating Medal Winner and doctor. Like her idol, she honed her skating skills and her love of the medical field. When she was expecting Lenyx, I arranged for us to get backstage at an ice show where Scott Hamilton, Brian Boitano, Roslyn Summers, a pre-Olympic Paul Wylie and others signed her figure skate. I loved figure skating because of her.

When Lenyx was born – the greatest joy in her life – we became even closer – and I became “Auntie”. Tyla’s greatest joy was being Lenyx’s mother. We enjoyed so many wonderful experiences together and we especially looked forward to the weekend long skating competitions, many down the Cape, which were some of our favorite roadtrips. She would get Lenyx all dolled up – from head to toe. We would return from these adventures with medals and memories. We loved to laugh and have fun.

We also enjoyed the boat for many summers. On the BLT 2, Bill was the Captain, Tyla was the First Mate, I was the Crew and Lenyx manned the crab traps. We had such fun every weekend – overnights at Cocktail Cove and days spent at Kettle Cove or going up the Annisquam and playing on the beach. As we would approach Kernwood Bridge on our morning departures out in to the open sea – she would look at me and ask, with a glint in her eye, “Is it noon, yet?” To which I would reply, “It must be noon somewhere.” – which was her cue to get the blender going for her favorite Mudslides. We would look forward to each new summer, knowing that fun and adventure would be found. Some of our best times were on that boat.

For our 50th birthdays in 2012, we shared a cruise to Bermuda and had the most wonderful time. We could have been the only two people on the ship and we still would have had the best time – sharing late nights and girl talk – getting dressed to the nines each day and night – swimming with dolphins, frolicking in the waves and shopping until we dropped. We were blessed to share this special memory. Tyla and I had many plans – from taking another cruise – to being roommates like the Golden Girls one day. What will I do without my Blanche?

In her professional life, Tyla was a registered nurse for almost 30 years until she could no longer work due to her MS a few years ago. This was a very difficult transition for Tyla, but she handled it with grace. It took all of her strength and energy to attend to the basics of her life and home. But every day – she would get beautifully dressed – not a hair out of place – complete with her lipstick. This was part of her refusal to succumb to her MS. This is what got her through her MS for so many years. She walked and drove until recent months. She never let it stop her and she refused to give in. She did it on her terms and overcame so much. We were grateful that it did not seem to bother her too much most of the time, though she was a master at hiding her struggle and forging ahead. Through it all – there was always that smile. Her head was always held high.

She was obsessed with decorating her home for holidays, especially the post lantern and front door arch way. She made every occasion extra special and sent thoughtful cards to mark all of our special days. She could wrap a gift better than anyone and she made sure that the outside of the gift was as magical as what was inside. At Easter, she would make rabbit footprint stencils that she would fill in with baby powder, sprinkled throughout the downstairs – so Lenyx would know that the Easter Bunny had been there. At Christmas, there were so many beautiful presents that you could not move in the living room. It was important for Tyla to make the holidays special for her daughter and her mom. She was generous, thoughtful and kind to all. Lenyx’s

birthdays were extravaganzas like no other – complete with themes, of course – and ponies or visits from Barney the purple dinosaur or The Little Mermaid. At work, she was known for her many holiday sweaters and for decorating the facility for all of the residents and staff to enjoy. She made her work home special, too.

Tyla loved peppermint stick ice cream, anything with fur, cheeseburgers, fried shrimp, diamonds, gold, bling, glitz, Law and Order, Dance Moms, blueberry muffins with sugar on top, Calla Lilies, roses, shopping and anything with her favorite star, Marilyn Monroe. She even named her white convertible, “Marilyn”. She loved her cars – Camaros, Mustangs, Lincolns, Sebrings – all quite sharp to look at – and monogrammed and pinstriped with her own unique style. She loved her hats – as her collection grew during the past year. She had the greenest eyes I have ever seen. And she never went anywhere without her lush lashes. She was always well coiffed from head to toe, always made up – right up until the end and until we tried our best to do it for her when she no longer could. She was beautiful outside and inside. While her illness did many unpleasant things to her, it thankfully spared her beauty. In recent months, her lashes and hair grew back and she did not have one single grey hair. There wasn’t a wrinkle on her face. She was simply stunning every day of her life. Even in the end, she wore beautiful silk pajamas and lipstick, every single day. When she could no longer attend to these things, we dressed her and applied her make-up for her. Looking good always made her feel better. And we would do anything to make her feel better.

Tyla took very good care of her mom and the home they shared on Salt Wall Lane. She was a loving mother to Lenyx, a loyal sister to Scott, Kathy and Todd, a favorite aunt, a treasured cousin and a devoted friend to so many.

Tyla made friends wherever she went – cousin friends, neighborhood friends, school friends, skating friends, college friends, work friends, store friends – and the staffs at Mass General in Danvers, Spaulding and Kaplan. Everyone loved her. She treated everyone with kindness and made everyone feel special. She lit up every room and all of our lives. She added the icing to our cakes. We were enhanced and elevated when in her presence. She made us all shine a little brighter.

Her family was most important to her. Her big brother, Scott, was really more like her father, as she often would say. She would say: “Scott, I have a flat” or “Scott, my car is making a noise” or “Scott, something is wrong with the sink” or the pool or the yard or the roof. And he always came to her rescue. He always made the time and moved heaven and earth for his little sister. And she loved this about him. She knew that she could count on him for everything and anything. She adored him. She needed him. She loved him – as she would say – whole bunches.

Her sister-in-law Kathy is an angel on earth. She showed up nearly every single morning and would sit with Tyla, her Sista Bling, for hours before she started her work shift, blueberry muffins with sugar on top in hand. She spent overnights at Kaplan House, lovingly tending to her sister. Her nursing skills came in so handy as we navigated our way through Tyla’s changing needs. We were comforted by her

knowledge, her care and her take charge attitude. She gave her all to Tyla and Tyla loved her for that. We all love her for that.

Tyla adored her mom, Janet. She took care of her mom and the home they shared. She loved to spoil her mom, with gifts she'd find wherever she'd go. Always so thoughtful, especially when it came to her mom. She could not have imagined having a better mom. And she loved when her mom would cuddle up next to her to watch TV or a movie or just to chat. She loved to work in the yard and garden – and couldn't wait to see the smile it would bring to her mother's face. She loved to make her mom happy and comfortable. She worked hard to keep an immaculate home. You were very lucky to have such a close mother and daughter relationship – which set the solid foundation for Tyla to become the wonderful mother that she was to Lenyx.

Lenyx. Her greatest accomplishment. Her greatest joy. She was most proud because she was your mom. You were her lovebug, her doodles – and she loved you to the moon and back. I wish we didn't have to go on without her, pretty girl, but I know and she knows that you will continue to make her proud in all that you do. In all that you become. She will always be with you and always watch over you. Love this strong never dies, Lenyx. It's not possible. So love her and talk to her because she will hear you. From the days when she dressed you like a dolly, with matching bows – to your shared love of skating and boating and parties and shopping and clothes – to your becoming your own young lady, on your own terms. While it might have irked her just a little that you were no longer into bling, she embraced and celebrated your own individual beauty and style. Lenyx, what we did for her this past year – and especially the past few weeks – Lenyx, she is so proud of you. You could give her no greater gift. She was there when your life started – and you returned the honor by being there, really being there – with and for your Mumma at the end of her life. There is no greater honor, pretty girl. You stepped up to the plate big time. You could not have loved her more. We took her to the gate as we promised we would. And you have so many of us here that will be there for you if ever you need. We are so lucky that Tyla left us the gift of you, her beautiful girl. Just like her mother.

Last April, we learned of Tyla's cancer diagnosis. We worked hard to save her and we tried to focus on living. Our mantra became: We have today and tomorrow and the next day. We tried to make the most of each and every day.

Tyla struggled to accept the fact that she even had cancer – up until the very end. She did not want to die and she would not give in. She was so blessed to have the love and support of so many around her. She looked forward to our cards and visits. Even when she was a patient, she was always the perfect hostess.

And while this passed year was difficult and unfair, we caught glimpses of many blessings and miracles, too. This past year, Tyla did more fun things than she had done in recent years. We took many roadtrips to Foxwoods. We returned to Newport. We had many sleepovers, even on her last night – as we continued to try to find a way to make her better and focus on living today. While we knew we couldn't cure her, we

hoped we'd find a way to manage things so she could stay here longer. She was determined to beat this. She fought this with her last breath. At her final moment, she was not alone. She was surrounded by people who loved her, while beautiful music played as we helped her to cross over. We got you to the gate as we promised, Ty. Such a brave girl who didn't want to leave us. We were ready for her suffering to be over, but we were not ready for her to go. And we will miss her and grieve for her and thank God for her.

Heaven has another angel, with a golden crown and a million dollar smile. She is at peace with Todd and Luke, Nana and Pep, and the others who have passed before. As I close my eyes, I can see her skating again, in blades of gold – covered in sequins and feathers – gliding across the ice full of strength – and flashing that smile. We will never forget that smile.

The battle is over. We have put down our swords. Rest in peace, sweet angel – our mother, our daughter, our sister and our friend. Until we meet again...we will hold you in our hearts. We love you to the moon and back – always. I can see her dimpled smile as she replies to all of us, "I love you more." God bless you and keep you safe, my friend.

Sisters at heart – best friends forever.

Love, Suzanne xo

April 18, 2015