

MY MEMORIES OF TIMOTHY

Timothy was living with my father, Ishmael Reed and her step-mother (my mother) Carla Reed when I was born in late February of 1977. She was sixteen and going to school at Berkeley High School. Of course I don't remember this, but my mother and I went to Japan for a month when I was five months old for her to do performances. When we came back, Timothy had moved back to Brooklyn to be with her mother.

The next time I saw her I was in Kindergarten or 1st grade again in Oakland. Timothy was twenty-two or twenty-three. She was addicted to Adderall, a medication for adult ADD and depression as she wasn't diagnosed with Schizophrenia until she was twenty-eight. She was staying at a recovery home. I vaguely remember dropping her off somewhere and waving goodbye. She returned to Brooklyn after she left the recovery home.

After that I saw her again in February of 1993 when we all went to New York City for a book party at the apartment of our father's literary agent. I was almost sixteen and a sophomore in high school. Timothy was thirty-two. My mother's oldest sister and her husband were there. So was one of our father's brothers and step-mother. I remember hanging out with Timothy and a friend of hers at the party. Timothy and I were/are huge introverts so if we were at a party together we would hang out with each other in a corner.

I saw her again in February of 1996. I was almost nineteen and a college freshman. Timothy was thirty-five. We were in New York City again. We all went out to dinner together. I don't remember the restaurant or what our conversations were about, but I remember it being pleasant. She was working as a peep show dancer in Times Square, a place she was to call Peep's Castle in her first novel.

I saw Timothy again about sixteen months later, which would be June of 1997. I was helping out our late grandmother in Buffalo who recently had had major heart surgery. I was twenty and Timothy was thirty-six. She came up to Buffalo for the weekend because our grandmother was turning eighty. She and our grandmother had their differences from stuff that happened before I was born, but they got along for the most part.

She moved out here permanently on March 5, 1999 and began to recover from her alcohol addiction. I had just turned twenty-two and Timothy was thirty-eight. I remember picking her up at SFO. She lived with my parents for a few months. Then in May or June of that year she moved to Chrysalis, a recovery program in Oakland. She graduated from there a year later and then went to Friendly Manor, another recovery program, which was further downtown. For the first two years she was here I barely saw her because I was living on campus and the summer that she graduated from Chrysalis I was studying abroad in England.

A few months after I graduated from Cal in 2001, Timothy met her husband, Alexander Hampton. They met at Vista College either in a Spanish class or a computer class. She was living in still another recovery house called the Bonita House, which was a mile west of the Cal

campus. She was beginning to struggle in the recovery homes, but I think having Alex around helped her. Plus she was in the midst of working on her first novel, *Showing Out*. She wrote her chapters in long hand and I would type them up. Then we would meet her each weekend and interview her to build the chapters out further and I would record her answers on a cassette tape. Everything became part of the novel. I think us bringing her to our house to have these sessions helped her because she got a break from the people in the recovery home. She would share her work-in-progress at AA meetings. After the novel was published in 2003, she would sell her books at the meetings too.

In the fall of 2002 she transferred to the Mandela House in Richmond. A year later, towards the end of 2003, the symptoms of Type II Diabetes came along probably from all of the meds she was on and the fact that she was gaining weight. Instead of noticing that the symptoms such as extreme thirst and frequent urination were reds flag waving in their faces, the program directors kicked her out. She stayed at a hotel near U.C. Berkeley for a week and then she went to the Alice Arts Center in Oakland where she lived until her marriage to Alex Hampton in June of 2007. When she permanently moved in with Alex she changed for the better because she struggled living in large groups and she struggled living on her own. He helped stabilize her, and got her to appointments on time.

From the Fall of 2009 to the Spring of 2012 we helped her work on her second novel, *Split in Two*. Just like we did with *Showing Out*, we met with her at a restaurant or coffee shop every weekend. I noticed that it seemed to lighten her mood. She was still attending AA meetings regularly. She was proud that she remained free from her alcohol addiction until the end of her life.

From 2012 on we got together occasionally. Sometimes we didn't get along, like the period between the Fall of 2016 and the Fall of 2018, which happens, but I was there for her a lot the last two and a half years of her life. The last time I saw her was between Thanksgiving and Christmas of 2020. I could tell she was physically struggling that day, but we didn't realize how sick she was. The last conversation we had with her was on February 4, 2021 when we said we would take her to the university to get her eyes checked. Then we got the shocking call the next day.