



**10.10.10**

**Rachel,**

**I wrote this poem to capture a special moment in time. It took place in 1988 at Deecy and Mike's wedding. I gave it to you on your ninth birthday.**

**Now it is your turn as the bride. But before you begin your new life with Edward, it's time to take a trip down memory lane.**

**And when we meet at your wedding, I sincerely hope you will once again kindly give me a dance.**

**Love always and then some,  
Uncle Mark**

## **RACHEL**

We met at a wedding  
You kindly gave me a dance  
We became fast friends  
A lifelong remembrance

And though your years are few  
You've taught me much  
The clarity of your view  
The power of your touch  
So innocent, so strong, so true

Now you've grown another year  
Each the best to come  
I send to you all my love  
For this and every one

So celebrate and enjoy your day  
And if you have a chance  
Remember the time  
We met at a wedding  
When you kindly gave me a dance.

Mark S Porro 1992



It was great to have you and Ed join us for dinner in our home. We had the opportunity to check out this guy, Ed, just in case you two ever got serious. Even though I didn't get the chance to check out his financials, he passed our scrutiny...

One of our most fun early dates in Chicago came one weekend when we went to a Mexican restaurant and then saw Wicked. I remember that night mainly because we were sitting eating dinner and I remember thinking how comfortable I felt with Rachel and how easy it was to get along with her. She was definitely growing into becoming my best friend...



Great guy! You two will do much good together. As I wrote on your wedding website: whenever I see the two of you together, I smile. Happy, happy, joy, joy! Mike P.

All the driving back and forth to Chicago was easily worth having those kind of moments. I also remember being distracted during the musical because I was in awe of how much I enjoyed seeing and making Rachel so happy. This is something I never experienced before and wondered if it meant "love." Ed

Playing murder in the dark in the pool at 601 when I visited you.  
Laurel

Anybody want a peanut... Thank you for sharing this movie with me, it's one of my favorites. Brennan



Rae, there's no denying the family resemblance. Three Handsome Guys

Rachel is a very thoughtful person. She always sends cards or letters telling me how much I mean to her and what a great MOM I am to her. I will always appreciate that! It is a real gift to get those from her. Mom

The first time I brought Mike Smith home to meet the family, you sat on his lap the whole time. Deecy



A few short weeks before Pozie passed away, I had finished making the flower girl hair pieces. I wanted to show Rae, so I took a picture of Pozie modeling it for her and sent it to her on my phone. Rae's comment back to me was "Oohhh, I want Pozie in my wedding." Mom



**I remember at one of our competitions with the dancers at the studio, she had to get driven there by her friends straight from the prom. She arrived on time and safe and awake, but forgot her pointe shoes. One of my other students just happened to have a brand new pair with her, so she ended up being able to dance after all. Thank God for Laura Sisk coming to the rescue. Mom**

**found a loophole to the agreement. After you graduated, you got an apartment in Chicago, with some of your college girlfriends. OK, I thought, only a few more years out west with you friends from school. And you waited until after college, to meet and get serious...**



**Remember when you were looking at colleges, and I said that you could go to college in Michigan, but you were not allowed to get serious with any guys from Michigan? I didn't want any excuses for staying out in the Midwest, so far from home, after graduation. So you...**

**with a guy who was from your college, but who you weren't acquainted with while there. Maybe I should have seen it coming. Welcome to the family, Ed. Rae, you couldn't have found a better reason to stay in Michigan. Carl**



**Rae Rae is the most fun to surprise. Loud, screaming, jumping up and down, etc. Priceless to say the least. Mom**



**Farewell to a best friend.  
He'll be well taken care  
of in Heaven.**

**Our time together at the cabin, just you and me, when you were in between jobs, making corn-hole games, hiking, picnic on boat on Brant Lake, and canoeing in the rain. All with Pozie, of course. Carl**

**I remember her going to Hawaii with her high school group of friends in her senior year. What a treat that was to have her experience that. When she came home I surprised her with a Lime green bedroom makeover. Another great reaction.**

Mom



**Even though you are now living in enemy country, the three "Buckeyes" in our family still love you and welcome Ed with open arms. Mark**



**I met Rachel's parents the first time at their cabin for New Years Eve. Rachel let me know a little about them, what to expect, etc. We had just got to talking about her Dad when we pulled up. He was waving with one hand and had an axe in the other (apparently just finished chopping wood). Somewhat intimidating. Although I have since learned that he doesn't always carry that axe around! Ed**

We stayed overnight at your apartment after moving Brennan out of her dorm freshman year. You introduced me to Chicago-style pizza. It was the first and last time for me, but being with you made it at least tolerable. Go Mama Rosa's pizza.

Mark

Hope you enjoy the can of bisque that I found for you and the pots so you can cook up a batch of your very own lobster soup and biscuits whenever you wish. Mike P.



You, Ed and I went out to breakfast in Ann Arbor and the ceiling kept dripping on him... weird. Brennan

Rachel is a jumper. She jumped when I proposed to her, when I said I loved her for the first time, and when we made the decision for her to move to Ann Arbor. Incidentally, in all these instances, she also cried.

Ed

**The year of all the creatures... I was sleeping in the same room with you and maybe Emily? and I was on the floor, and in the middle of the night you had me come up and share the bed with you... I thought you just wanted me to keep you warm, in the morning we saw at least one snake slithering around the floor...**

**Rachel is the first child of ours to give us a real scare after she was born. At about five weeks old, if I can remember right, she started throwing up all the milk she got from me. After an x-ray it was discovered she had a classic case of pyloric stenosis. Very scary but totally fixable! Thank God. Within a few weeks she was back to being just a regular infant again. Mom**



**we just stood there on the bed & yelled for help. Thank you for sharing your bed with me, and saving me from the snake. Brennan**

**It was great when you baby sat for us once in a while, so Mike and I could get away. Thank you! Deecy**

We're at one of our annual family reunions. This time we're in the Adirondacks, and we're sitting down for dinner. You order Lobster Bisque. You get your bowl of soup from the waiter and slowly spoon it into your mouth while watching everyone else finishing their meals. Before too...

Game night was wonderful... I think I still have a scar from playing spoons with all your friends, and I was the second to last one in.  
Brennan



Long you turn to the waiter with a bit of impatient frustration in your voice and ask, "Hey, where's my biscuit?" Mike P.

I had many nicknames for all my kids, Rachel's was Rae chelly, Rae Rae, and Sunshine. My favorite way to greet her was when she would wake up from a nap or in the morning and I would hear her from her crib and continue up the stairs, rolling my R's with a long RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRACHEL! Not your quiet typical mother wake up call! She loved it! Mom

**Rae had very fine hair as a toddler. Every morning she woke up, the back of her head had this big clump of teased blond hair. We used to call it her puff! I still cherish the film we have of her hunting for Easter eggs in our back yard and she had a major puff and talking with her raspy voice moaning about not finding any eggs!**  
Mom

**The first time I drove to Chicago to see Rachel I got lost just before coming into the city. This is a very difficult thing for me... getting lost. I take pride in my sense of direction and I ended up somewhere in Gary, calling Rachel to get her help. She was so patient and couldn't wait...**



**It was so fun having your wedding shower at the Box. I loved watching all of the girls together and laughing with you. I forgot that I was the old lady in the group! And remember those dainty monster-sized cupcakes? (No, I won't mention any of those other trinkets you were given. Just make sure you keep them for the 10 year anniversary.) And oh yeah, you left the straw. Deecy**

**to see me. My frustration quickly turned to excitement when I picked her up from work and she was standing in front of her building with a huge smile. Ed**

**I consider Rachel the evangelist of the family. She used to ask anyone that she would meet, “do you know the Lord”. Now, combine that statement with a strong NJ accent with a long “R” sound and we just crack up! Mom**

**I finally met Ed while I was in Ann Arbor shooting a wedding... He’s great I am so happy and excited for you guys! Brennan**



**I can’t remember which family reunion it was, but Rachel order lobster bisque. She finished the bowl and said “that was really good, but where is my biscuit”  
Jessie**

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**Losing Grandpa Po was difficult for all of us, but what helped ease my sorrow was seeing you and the other grandchildren at the wake, stuffing his pockets with his favorite candies. Mark**

**I remember talking with Rach about wedding planning. She was unusually laid back about lots of the little decisions because the big decision - ending up with Ed - was already decided on! Jessica**



**Bringing up three daughters there were lots of party and prom dresses to buy. The one I remember most on Rachel was the black halter top one with the netted white skirt for the lower half. She reminded me of Marilyn Monroe in that one and I hoped she didn't stand on top of a air vent while at the prom! Mom**

**Mark, my Mom and Shea came to move me back to Michigan after my first year in the city. We sat in your house and ate deep dish Chicago style pizza, while watching Across the Universe. Brennan**

At the vacation in the poconos, Mandy, Emily, Brennan, Rachel and I did silly face painting. I can still picture rachel with all of her colorful, silly faces. Jessie

Rachel is a very thoughtful person. She always sends cards or letters telling me how much I mean to her and what a great MOM I am to her. I will always appreciate that! It is a real gift to get those from her. Mom



Rae was the first to help promote Grandpa Po's Originals by adding her friends to our email list. We got an "FU" response from one who turned into a customer shortly after. So, an "FU" is not always a bad thing. Mark

I remember many college discussions about who we would end up marrying. Ed is a better match for Rach than we could have ever dreamed up. Jessica

**I remember when Rachel was my camp counselor at Spring Hill and Rae showed us her granny panties.**  
Shea



**I remember going to The Earle with Ed and Rach for their first dinner out. Craig and I could tell that they were a perfect match!** Jessica

**I remember you and all the other grandchildren crowding around Grandma Zennie in our living room as she passed out Christmas gifts each year.** Mark

**Pozie's favorite was Rachel by far. Pozie knew that when Rae was home, she got to sleep on her bed with her. She would never jump up on furniture or a bed unless Rae was home for a visit! Mom**

**Visiting Chicago, going on restaurant tour with Rachel. It is safe to say that Rae is a foody. She may enjoy a good meal even more than me. Abe**



**We should have Rae fill the book with her memories. I am embarrassed to be struggling for good memories when she could probably go on for days with great stories from our family. She has one of the best memories of anyone I know. Abe**

**You are always up for a laugh and most of the time you are the one to make the joke. You have a great sense of humor and always make me laugh... usually to the point where my stomach hurts and my muscles are sore the next day. Mandy**

I recall sitting on your bed at 601 during one of my visits when you were a young teen, teaching you Psalm 121 and coaching you to memorize it. Years later, you sometimes included a verse or two from that Psalm in a note to me from college. Your name is written in my Bible next to that Psalm and every time I look at hills, (which happens a lot here in southern CA!) I pray...

While you are my little sister, I also view you as an old friend. It doesn't matter how much time passes, we can always sit down and have a great and meaningful conversation. I appreciate your openness and insights from matters ranging from family...



It for you, that the Lord will watch over your life, your coming and your going both now and forevermore. You will need that prayer as you enter into your married life as you learn the true meaning of loving without condition, especially when the going gets tough. May your feet not slip. Auntie Laurel

to business. I am happy now to bring Ed into these conversation (and not just because he can help people talk through things). Love you, Rae. Abe

1. During my wedding weekend in Bermuda, immediate family got there a day before everyone else arrived. We were all gathered in my parent's hotel room, laying all over their room and hanging out listening to Rachel's dance music mix she made. Rae was giving us a preview of all her favorite dance songs & classic oldies on...



2. the mix, blasting it in the hotel room with all of us girls dancing around the room. Matt and the guys are pretty quiet just observing us girls carrying on and acting silly together, until a few older familiar songs are played and Matt starts singing along. Rae picks up on his growing enthusiasm with one song in particular, and...

3. Always quick thinking, gets the idea to press Pause on the CD player mid chorus. Suddenly Matt finds himself belting out the chorus A capella-style to Chicago's "Hard to Say I'm Sorry." And we are all staring at him, jaws dropped. Everyone bursts out laughing, newly exposed to Matt's goofy side, and his undeserved confidence when singing...



4. It was a really funny moment. But the night of our wedding, we were so thankful to Rae for making that music mix because the band took a really long dinner break just when everyone was getting warmed up on the dance floor. Rae, quick thinking again, jumps up on stage and pops in her CD. The dance party immediately took off. She saved our reception! Em

All my girls were naturals with dancing and having wonderful stage presence. But Rae had the whole package for possibly running Dance For Joy someday in the future. I knew there was a chance she would not come back when we sent her to college to get a degree of her...



Choice. It was sad to see her choose to stay out in Michigan but after she met the man of her dreams Edzee, I know it was God's best for her. Mom



**Hope college experience - what a great choice, and what a great experience you made of your college years. I remember that service in the Hope College Chapel, for the new freshman students and their parents. I knew then, during that service, that Hope was the right place for you...**

**Visiting your dorm room at Hope when I visited Michigan during your sophomore year. Laurel**



**Our God of Wonders. Made it a lot easier driving a thousand miles back home, knowing that you were in the place that God had led you to. All you best friends, and of course your new best friend, Ed. Carl**

**When I heard you chose Hope College, I was so excited you were going to be in Michigan. Yeah, a family member in town! It was fun calling you to join us when we ate at one of our favorite restaurants, 'Til Midnight. I always made sure you had dessert before you left. Deecy**



**Rachel always had a way she smiled. Her little eyes would go to slits, like the sun was shining too much, thus her nickname Sunshine! Mom**



**Bright green! Abe**

**I love that you are pursuing your painting passion while continuing to pursue a professional career. Watching you mature as an artist has been a real pleasure. Besides, without your paintings our house would be dreary. There are now four rooms...**



**that feature your work and each one is unique. To date, we have the Venice scenes, strange town, lily, and flower fields for the girls. Thanks for sharing your talent with us. Abe**



**1. Back at our old house, I think I was in 3rd or 4th grade. I came home from playing outside and the back sliding glass door was locked, so I knocked on it to see if anyone was home to come let me in, nobody answered, so I went to the shed to get a key. When I opened the door...**

**3. When she went back upstairs I came out and started climbing the stairs making slow and really loud footsteps, then I started rattling the doorknob of my parents bedroom where Rachel, Mandy, and Mia Vaga were hiding. Sometime during all this Rachel called one of our neighbors and he came over...**



**2. I heard muffled screams and footsteps running up the stairs. I realized they thought a burglar broke into the house. I thought I could have some fun with this, so I went into the den and started playing the Jaws theme on the piano. After a minute or so Mandy stairs with her field hockey stick. I hid in the corner of the den behind the TV trays, trying not to laugh...**

**4. (after Rachel joked about our neighbor who came to help just coming over and ringing the doorbell, like they would come out from hiding and answer it and be like "yea Mr. Kreger thanks for coming the bad guys around here somewhere"). Anyway, I think I got in pretty big trouble for that. I think I got in pretty big trouble for that.**  
Josh

**I clearly remember the time when you babysat us and you told us about the thing in that place where those people did whatever late at night in the room by the large tree, and the wind was blowing and the leaves falling and.. it's too frightening to go on. Still gives me goosebumps.** Sawyer

**Come on in, shut the door, lock it, swallow the key, nothing's weird.**  
Mandy



**Making stupid faces in the camera and laughing at ourselves for hours at a time will never get old.** Mandy

**I remember driving with Rach up to Ann Arbor to visit Ed, and she was the most giddy I had ever seen her.**  
Jessica

1. Rachel never approved of a boyfriend until I brought Matt home. For Matt, she was an instant fan, especially after discovering his affinity for the band U2. Anyone that knows Rae, knows how enthusiastic she is and how much fun it is to surprise...

3. Concert that said "ONE LOVE". In line to get in, she was randomly selected to get into the "inner circle" which is the ring that surrounds the stage, between General Admission and the stage - the closest one could possibly get to Bono during the concert. Because we were with her, we all got to go into the inner circle with her! We were all so excited, and of...



2. her. Matt had bought U2 tickets for their concert in NYC, and surprised Rae by getting her a ticket too, including a plane ticket home from school since she was in Michigan. She went NUTS when she found out, couldn't stop talking about it, and made a T-shirt to wear to the...

4. Course she went even more bonkers than she already was, jumping up and down screaming the whole way in. That was my first U2 concert and it was probably my most exciting concert to date. She had a lot to do with that - Her zeal and enthusiasm is contagious. Em



**Watching your cool tap dance number and your never ending smile at your final Dance for Joy performance was a joy indeed. You and your sisters performed so well in all of the recitals I had the pleasure of attending. Mike P.**

**October 23 marks two significant days for our family. The day you graced this earth with your presence, and the day Grandpa Po left it. I'll always cherish the beautiful and poignant essay you wrote. Even today it still brings tears. Mark**

**I always saw a resemblance of my Grandma Po in you. Po thought so too. That's a good thing. Mark**



**You always give the best reactions to things and it usually involves screaming and some jumping or your hands clasped in front of your chest. You always are genuinely excited for me when I have good news to tell you. Mandy**



**It's nice having you in Michigan. I remember being surprised by you at Holland State Park.** Mike S.



**Is it normal to have a hair dresser that is halfway across the country? Oh and thanks for never getting me back for cutting off your ponytail.**

Mandy



I remember the night that Rach and Ed met very well! Rach spotted Ed from across the soccer field, where he was chatting with Craig. She made me text Craig to ask who the cute guy was that he was talking to, and if he thought that he'd be interested in Rach. Craig happened to...

I remember meeting this little smiley girl for the first time when Deecy and I went to New Jersey to make arrangements for our wedding. Rachel sat on my lap the entire afternoon and couldn't stop smiling. Mike S.



Be living with Ed at the time, and he knew that any guy would be interested in Rach, and so the sparks started flying. :) Later on we went out, and Rach kept making her way to stand by Ed - kicking his feet under the table, and just being cute. He totally loved it. Jessica

Never let Rachel give you a haircut. Aaron



**Snake in cabin - our family reunions. All the fun times with family, visiting different lakes around the country. The most traumatic though, for Rachel, was the cabin in Port Severn, Canada. The cabin with the snake. The Houdini snake. Why did that snake have to choose the cabin with all the girls. No sleep that night. Carl**



**Ed told Craig shortly after he met Rach, "that Rach is a real tom-cat."**  
Jessica

Although Rae has been living the farthest of us kids, starting with college in Michigan and then living in Chicago and Ann Arbor ever since, she has always made a great effort to go where the party is, whenever possible, even when we know her...

Despite living in Michigan for the past 6 or so years, you've done a great job of visiting and being there for me when I needed it. Remember when I had to work on Christmas day the first year I was married and out of the house? I was so depressed about it - then you and Mom "popped in" and brought Aaron and I bags of presents...



funds to travel were tight. She has hardly ever missed a family event I think I speak for us all saying that we really appreciate her efforts and money spent to be with the family. Our gatherings would not be the same without her! Em

(plus I think you only could stay for a few hours). You helped Aaron and I move out of our Cambridge apt and into our first house here in NH. You visited and I got to tell you in person that I was pregnant for the first time. Mandy



**I remember seeing an old video we found in our basement of Peter and the Wolf and you played the birdie.**  
Owen



**Helping you go the Summit camp for two weeks.** Laurel



I remember seeing that I had missed 10 calls in about 1/2 hr the night that they got engaged. I cried as Rach told me the whole story because I knew that Ed is the perfect partner for her. He is a lucky guy! :)  
Jessica



Rae thank you for taking me to the Ballet for my Graduation present! We saw Sleeping Beauty, which was a performance I was in (as lilac fairy). It was so cool seeing the professionals performing variations that I had learned. Brennan



**Bringing up three daughters there were lots of party and prom dresses to buy. The one I remember most on Rachel was the black halter top one with the netted white skirt for the lower half. She reminded me of Marilyn Monroe in that one and I hoped she didn't stand on top of a air vent while at the prom! Mom**



**I'll always remember you coming to see the kids ballets and bringing flowers. You were the eyes for the Porro side. It meant a lot to me and I know it meant a lot to the kids.**  
Decky

**I can't think of Rachel without singing "in this very room..."** Jessie



**I think I met Ed for the first time at the Beach Box because it was a half way spot for the two of you. You were still living in Chicago and Ed was in Ann Arbor. And I remember asking if he was the 'one'.** Deecy



**I remember when you gave me one of your art pieces. I loved it. We put it up right away in a protective area and have had it hanging ever since. What a treat to have your art. Deecy**



**I remember visiting your house at Hope College. You gave us a tour, showed us your art, and you cut Connor's hair. I guess this was prior to Aaron's experience. Mike S.**

**Remember when Lorissa, Em and I visited you in Chicago? I think it was February and it was so freezing and windy. Lorissa didn't even take a shower the whole weekend cause she didn't want to get wet. We were bundled the whole time, and when we went outside only our eyes were showing. We went shopping and repeatedly ran just from one store to the next store over to warm up. It would have been miserable except that we were in good company :) When I left I felt bad leaving you there in the cold.**  
Mandy





**Grandpa Po always got a kick out of seeing how well his kids got along, especially during our reunions. It's nice to see this trait has been passed down to your family. Must be in the genes. Mark**



**Above was Ed's first time meeting all the family, in the confined space of the cabin at Christmas, with everybody, a true test by fire, which Ed survived with flying colors. Carl**

