

I AM MY MOTHER'S REVENGE

Nicholas J. Pirro

I am my mother's revenge,

not spiteful
or vengeful,

but here to carry the voice
she couldn't
when it was muffled
or stifled.

I am the words
she swallowed
to keep the peace,

the questions
she learned not to ask,

the anger she folded neatly
and placed somewhere
behind responsibility,

motherhood,

work,

and all the things
a woman was expected
to endure
without making anyone else
uncomfortable.

I am not here
to avenge her pain.

I am here
to make certain
it was not meaningless.

There is a difference.

Revenge does not always arrive
with clenched fists.

Sometimes it arrives
with open hands

holding everything
someone else was forced
to put down.

Sometimes revenge
is simply refusing
to remain silent

about the things
that silence protected.

And my mother knew silence.

Not because
she had nothing to say.

God, no.

She had enough words
to fill classrooms.

Enough patience
to reach children
others had already decided
could not be reached.

Enough stubbornness
to find another way
when the accepted way
failed them.

She taught.

She listened.

She improvised.

She believed.

And when the world said,
this is how it is done,
she sometimes answered,
then perhaps
we should do it differently.

That was my mother.

And maybe
that is why

I am this way.

Maybe rebellion
is hereditary.

Maybe questioning
what everyone else accepts

is something passed
from mother to son

more faithfully
than eye color.

Maybe every time
I refuse to accept

that's just the way it is

I am hearing her.

Maybe every institution
I question,

every rule
I challenge,

every person
I defend

because their voice
is smaller than the room
trying to silence it,

is her hand
still guiding mine.

I am my mother's revenge.

Against every person
who underestimated her.

Against every moment
she doubted herself.

Against every dream
postponed

because children needed raising,
bills needed paying,

students needed teaching,
and life has a cruel habit
of asking women
to place themselves
last.

I cannot give her
those years back.

I cannot return
the opportunities
that passed her by.

I cannot find
every moment
when she wanted
to scream

but chose instead
to keep everyone else
from falling apart.

I cannot rewrite
her life.

But I can write.

And maybe
that matters.

Because I found
the words she left me.

A letter.

Her voice
sitting quietly on a page,

waiting years
for me to understand

that she had given me
more than advice.

She had given me
a map.

Think things through.

Make mistakes.

Learn from them.

Educate yourself.

Educate your children.

Walk away
from foolish people.

Take pictures.

Be spontaneous.

Get in the car
sometimes

without knowing
where you're going.

And if you get lost,

maybe call it
an adventure.

I didn't know then

that ordinary advice
could become sacred.

You never do

when the person speaking
is still here.

You assume
there will always be
another conversation.

Another question.

Another cup of coffee.

Another drive.

Another chance
to ask,

Mom, what did you mean by that?

Until there isn't.

And suddenly

every sentence
becomes archaeology.

You dig through memories

looking for pieces
of someone

you once believed
would always be there.

A photograph.

A letter.

A phrase.

A handwriting
you would recognize
in a room full
of strangers.

And you hold it
like proof.

She was here.

She thought.

She dreamed.

She worried.

She laughed.

She got scared.

She got lost.

She drank coffee.

She blasted the radio.

She taught children.

She raised children.

She made mistakes.

She loved.

She mattered.

She fucking mattered.

And perhaps
that is the revenge.

That time
doesn't get everything.

It took her body.

It cannot take
what she taught me.

It took her voice.

So I will lend her mine.

It took the woman
from the classroom,

but somewhere
there are people

walking through this world

carrying lessons
they may not even remember
learning from her.

And there are two children
who carry her differently.

A daughter.

A son.

And through us,

pieces of her
keep entering rooms

she will never see.

I am my mother's revenge
against forgetting.

Against the slow erosion
of memory.

Against the cruel mathematics
of time

that turns people
into photographs,

photographs
into boxes,

boxes
into names

someone eventually
doesn't recognize.

Not her.

Not while I am here.

I will say her name.

Lorraine Ann Pirro.

I will write it.

I will publish it.

I will attach it
to the things she believed in.

Education.

Compassion.

Patience.

Children who need
someone to believe
they are capable

before they learn
to believe it themselves.

I will make room
for her story

in mine.

Not because
she was perfect.

She wasn't.

Neither am I.

But perfection
is a terrible requirement
for being remembered.

She was human.

Complicated.

Funny.

Afraid sometimes.

Strong sometimes.

Lost sometimes.

Certain sometimes.

A mother.

A teacher.

A woman
trying to make sense
of her own life

while teaching me
how to make sense
of mine.

And now I understand
something I couldn't
when she was here.

Our parents
do not hand us
finished wisdom.

They hand us fragments.

Things they learned
too late.

Things they wish
someone had told them.

Warnings disguised
as advice.

Regrets disguised
as lessons.

Love disguised
as nagging.

And then they leave us
to assemble it.

So I am assembling.

Word by word.

Memory by memory.

Lesson by lesson.

I am building something
from what remains.

Not a monument.

She wouldn't need one.

Something better.

Continuation.

Because revenge
against death

is not pretending
someone never died.

It is refusing
to let their existence
end there.

So I will carry
what deserves carrying.

I will put down
what hurt her.

I will learn
from what she got wrong.

I will protect
what she got right.

And I will give
my children

the best pieces
of both of us.

Maybe someday
they will give those pieces
to theirs.

And someone
who never knew her

will show kindness
because kindness traveled

from her

to me,

from me

to them,

and onward.

They may never know
where it began.

That's okay.

Legacy does not require
credit.

Only continuation.

So no,

I am not my mother's revenge
because I hate the world
that hurt her.

I am my mother's revenge

because I intend
to leave it better

than she found it.

Because every time
the world tried
to make her smaller,

she taught me
to grow.

Every time
her voice was muffled,

she unknowingly raised
someone

who would spend his life
finding microphones.

And now that I have one,

I know exactly
what I want to say.

My mother was here.
Her life mattered.
Her work mattered.
Her mistakes mattered.
Her lessons mattered.
Her love mattered.
And whatever tried
to silence her
failed.
Because I heard her.
I still hear her.
And as long as
there is breath in me,
as long as
there are words
left to write,
as long as
I can tell her story,
she will never again
have to whisper.
I am my mother's revenge.
And I will make sure
the world hears her.

About the Poet

Dr. Nicholas J. Pirro is a writer, researcher, publisher, and founder of Pyrrhic Press and Ink & Echo. His creative work explores love, loss, family, resilience, memory, and the complicated inheritance passed between generations.

His poetry is deeply personal, often drawing from lived experience and the people who shaped him. In *I Am My Mother's Revenge*, Pirro reflects on the life and legacy of his mother, Lorraine Ann Pirro, transforming grief into continuation and remembrance into purpose.

His writing favors emotional honesty over convention, exploring not only what we inherit from those who came before us, but what we choose to carry forward. Through his poetry, Pirro seeks to preserve the voices, lessons,

and ordinary moments that might otherwise disappear with time.

For him, writing is more than remembrance. It is a way of refusing to let the people we love become forgotten.

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