

Radiation, Cancer Loss and Sarah McLachlan's "I Will Remember You"

Ana did not fear death, and her openness about that was a comfort to me,

April 17, 2023 By [Robin McGee](#)

Last week I lost another dear friend to cancer.

Anamarija Wagner and I met when we both gave talks on our cancer experience to medical students. We became close, spending time together and conversing online. We went to a few Relay for Life events together. Once, we were walking the crowded survivors lap around the Relay track trailing festive balloons. Our balloons gravitated to each other and wrapped around each other. Ana laughingly said it was a sign that our lives will be entwined.

Like me (see [The Cancer Olympics](#)), Ana had an unusual diagnostic story. After months of runaround, her breast cancer ultimately got detected due to... her dog. Her little boxer would bark wildly at her left breast. A doctor was on the verge of dismissing her over the phone again when he heard the dog in the background. Shaken and surprised, the doctor was moved to allow Ana to come in for the tests that ultimately revealed her malignancy.

Shortly after I recurred, Ana was diagnosed with a rare gynecological cancer. The chemo and radiations she tried either failed or created serious reactions. She moved to Texas to be closer to her son John and to try what U.S. healthcare could offer. After further treatment proved futile, she moved from hospital back into her son's home. Her passing was described as very peaceful.

Ana had what the old folks would call "second sight." She had several near-death experiences over her lifetime, and possessed remarkable intuition regarding other people's futures. She prophesized that I might live longer than I expect. Ana did not fear death, and her openness about that was a comfort to me.

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After many false starts I was able to start radiation in January. We had planned it to avoid the region of my pelvis where I had that delicate Toronto reconstruction surgery. Unfortunately, recent scan results showed progression in the untreated area, whereas the treated sections were stable. Consequently, I am now back in Halifax for another two weeks, this time to radiate the untreated area. No one can tell me the risk to the repair from radiation, the situation is so uncommon.

Andrew and I rescheduled a trip to Costa Rica a week after radiation ends. It is our first effort at travel since lockdown. We need a place where we can rest and maybe have the odd daytrip. We did not have it in us to plan something with many moving parts. I will be tired from treatment, and Andrew is tired from constantly having to hold down the fort.

Today's song is dedicated to Anamarija. We both loved Canadian music, and so my choice is for singer/songwriter Sarah McLachlan's ballad "[I will remember you](#)." Released in 1995 for a movie soundtrack, McLachlan has several versions of it. The live version went gold in the US and earned McLachlan her second Grammy Award for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance in 2000. Her haunting delivery and touching lyrics remind us that life is short, and relationships are everything.

I will remember you, will you remember me?
Don't let your life pass you by
Weep not for the memories

Remember the good times that we had?
I let them slip away from us when things got bad
How clearly I first saw you smilin' in the sun
Want to feel your warmth upon me
I want to be the one

I will remember you, will you remember me?
Don't let your life pass you by
Weep not for the memories

I'm so tired but I can't sleep
Standin' on the edge of something much too deep
It's funny how we feel so much but we cannot say a word
We are screaming inside, but we can't be heard

I will remember you, will you remember me?
Don't let your life pass you by
Weep not for the memories

So afraid to love you
But more afraid to lose
Clinging to a past that doesn't let me choose
Once there was a darkness
Deep and endless night
You gave me everything you had, oh you gave me life

I will remember you, will you remember me?
Don't let your life pass you by
Weep not for the memories

I will remember you, will you remember me?

Don't let your life pass you by

Weep not for the memories

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<http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/blog/radiation-cancer-loss-sarah-mclachlans-will-remember>