

It's for your own good

The gold tooth we found in the backyard is from an old woman... whose bones are up in a trunk in the attic... and she's watching us.

The little holes on the sides of the speakers are where I put food in every night after you go to sleep for the little people in there who make the music.

That tall present under the tree is a box of basketballs.

I never cheated on your father.

Anyway, the only lie my parents told me that I could think of was that whenever we would hear the ice cream truck playing music down the street they would yell: "There's the MUSIC TRUCK" and I would be so excited because I just thought that it was a truck that played music for no reason other than to be nice in the afternoon. I never asked for ice cream. It never occurred to me.

I still just think it's nice that they play music for free.

My middle name is the letter 'J,' and when I was young I asked my father what it stood for—he told me that the first born of the first born of the first born etc, skipped a letter in the alphabet, which was why his middle name was 'H.'

Then one Christmas, I was hanging out with my uncle who's really into family genealogy (every family seems to have someone like that) and saw that the tradition stopped before my father's name and I asked him about it. He told me that he had never heard of that tradition and that the 'H' in my father's name was short for his grandfather's first name which was 'H'entry.

There are no J names for 8 generations in the Pillum family. He laughed that I had seriously believed it.

Later, I called my mom to ask her the real story, and she said that they had chosen 'J' so that I could, "make it stand for whatever I wanted it too," and "hadn't I already known that?"

I found out that I had been believing (and telling people about) this weird origin of my name when I was 21 years old.

'Jerks...

First is that Aurelia's mom told her that capers were pickled sunflower seeds.

The other one is my mom told me that if I looked/played at the baby bunnies for too long I would kill them.

When I was a teenager, I found out that I had two half brothers and a half sister that my mother had abandoned when they were toddlers (she became pregnant with her first when she was 16 and dropped out of high school). They had a totally different upbringing from me and, when I contacted them, I found it difficult to believe that we were even related. We were as different as humans could possibly be, reinforcing my life-long fantasy that I was purchased from Gypsies (my full brother had me convinced of this Gypsy theory when I was young—I think we both tried to fantasize our way out of our family). When my mother found out that I had made contact with my half siblings (she was still very much in denial of their existence), she kicked me out of the house and I became a homeless teenager. The whole ordeal reinforced the nurture over nature theory for me and established a belief that families can be chosen rather than preordained by blood.

My mother, my sister and I were watching "Nightline" or something. I was much older at this point, but you must remember how sheltered I was. The program was about an disgusting old Peeping Tom that masturbated outside of teenager girls windows. Mom said, "Do y'all know what masturbation is?" My sister, while rolling her eyes, said "yeah, mom" like it was the dumbest question ever. I piped up, "Um, I don't know what it is..." And my mother said disgustedly, "It's something that really, really SICK people do." Nothing else. End of conversation. I didn't masturbate until I was 18.

My granddaddy told me only to date good Christian boys, because the love of God was in them, and I'd be safe. The good Christian boy I fell in love with in high school raped me.

About 5 or 6 years old, I was watching a claymation educational video about dinosaurs (claymation + dinosaurs = ultra winner) that I had just rented from our local library. When the narrator got to the part of, "Millions and millions of years ago..." the video froze, with my mother standing behind holding the remote control: "You know that is just a lie, don't you." Wide-eyed I shook my head indicating puzzlement. "The earth is only 6000 years old. It's in the Bible."

Suddenly I lived in a divided world.

When I was about 6 or 7 my mother got a picture book about sex from the library. I don't remember expressing any interest in the subject, and at the time thought "oh no. aren't I a little young for this?" My mother and I read the book together. One of the drawings was of a man and a woman in bed under the covers with him on top of her. I asked why he was on top of her. Aren't men bigger than women? Is he going to crush her? My mother said "No, she'll be fine. He has to be on top. That's just the way sex works."

My mother lied about the identity of my father.

The text for this book was compiled from lies people were told by their parents. These were shared anonymously and are presented anonymously. I want to deeply thank everyone who shared their stories. This book acts as part of an entire meal/installation project but can be digested seperately as well. The concept, book and installation/meal, were created by Claire Siepser of Little Dinosaur Press in 2011.

*Sharing is caring afterall.*