

A few years ago, I decided to pick up my camera, after many years of it lying dormant to get back to my artistic roots and talent. I never really had given it up, by taking pictures of my boys growing up, or that family event, however I finally picked it up to photograph what I see in an artistic, creative way.

I started to photograph my work environment. At the time I was working for a big department store. I found beauty in the mundane things that people take for granted. Somewhere, in that world, I was inspired to take pictures of the mannequins. It was to show what goes on in the back of the house than how they were displayed in the front of the house. I found humor in how sometimes the mannequins were just left on a flatbed, or in a corner. They became my quiet people who had a story to tell.

I eventually graduated from my mannequins to start looking at myself. I had joined an online erotic and fetish photography group. I had recently become an empty nester, and I've been traveling on a journey of self-exploration. I have done numerous self portraits of myself, expressing my sexuality and what I'm now figuring out of who I am. However, that part of my creativity had been put on hold.

Five days before this past Christmas in 2019 my life was turned upside down. My husband was diagnosed with stage 3 pancreatic cancer. Not only was he unlucky in having one of the worst cancers out there, by the way, the survival rate is only 4-10 percent with this one, he was also diagnosed with kidney cancer. He was told about a week later that it is very rare to have two completely different kinds of cancer at the same time. But he had them.

I had decided that I needed to photograph him during his battle. I don't know what made me to do this, but all I do know is that I had to. It was for my boys. It was for me. It was my way of dealing with his sickness. It was an outlet for me to cope. It was also to document his progress of getting better hopefully. I had also started to share the photos at the print and share I belong to. One gentleman told me I was brave and had courage in what I was doing. It's not easy taking pictures of a loved one that is so sick.

The doctors gave him a year, two at best. He never came close to that. He lost his battle two days before my birthday, just a couple of weeks ago. It was less than three months. After the aggressive chemo they had him on, and he finally had his CT scan, we found the mass grew. There was a small window for him before they would start him on another regiment to kill the cancer. He never made it. His body was so fragile. I found out after his passing he had become discouraged with the results.

The set of photographs I'm submitting start from the day I waited with him in the holding unit, where he is on the stretcher waiting to have his port to be put in, during his chemo, and a selfie I took of us in a quiet moment. In this short time of his battle, it was a long road for all of us. It affected me, and my two boys, it was very difficult for all of us. It still is now grieving his loss. My husband had no clue I was photographing him, except for the selfie I took of us. I didn't want him to know. All I wanted to do was to capture the moment, freeze it in time, and to look back on it when he was better and cured. I don't know why I am submitting these. I think in a way I want to tell his story. He was just a simple man.