



Growing Up Interesting

“It doesn’t matter if my children grow up to be wealthy, what matters is that they grow up to be interesting.”

An unlikely quote from a parent, but it is a quote from our father. Of course how many fathers encourage their grade school daughters drawing attempts by telling them they are making “primitive art” (and the daughters know exactly what that means...) or take teenage daughters to the mall to get their ears pierced while he gets his ear pierced, or offers to pay for the tattoo if either daughter gets the urge for a little bit of permanent body art.

These are all examples of what our life was like growing up with a father who is an artist and educator. He gave us an unusual and valuable perspective on life.

One of the formative experiences of our early childhood was living in East Africa. This experience built on our earliest years of living in Manhattan and Brooklyn in New York. It taught us to open our eyes to the various cultures around us and helped us learn to observe, accept and participate in unfamiliar situations. We learned through experience that art is not only hung on walls and displayed in museums, but it surrounds us and can be found everywhere we look.

We have fond memories of our childhood. Art was always an encouraged activity in our home. Dad would let us go to his drawing classes and we would sit in the back and draw with the students. We experienced encouragement and support for our ideas. When we had a plan, the first question was never ‘where can we put that,’ but rather ‘how can we make that.’

We had no television for a long time, but didn’t feel the lack, as we were a family of readers. We would go to the library once a week and check out stacks of books to take home. One winter Dad read us the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. It was better than anything we could have watched on television. Every evening we would sit around the woodstove and listen for as long as he would read. As adults, re-reading those books, the voices he created for each character echo in our minds.

Music was also a big part of our childhood. When we moved out to the country, friends from New York would come out to visit for days or weeks. When the evening dinner dishes were done everyone would start to bring out their instruments. Down the hill someone would light a fire in the firepit. As the instruments were tuned, they blended

with the sounds of crickets and frogs from our pond. The children chased fireflies as the first notes began. The playing and singing would continue long into the night, and we would fall asleep to the background of banjos, guitars and fiddles.

As we got older we realized that many of the activities that we considered typical were perhaps unusual. We amazed our friends by talking about art openings, museums we had been to, places we had traveled, artist’s lofts, etc., etc... but in reality, we both feel like our childhood was normal. We had security, love and encouragement.

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Secrets of an Ancient Heart... Burning the boat at spring solstice. Denmark
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