

WAR MEMORY for My Retrospect

My novel, *One Hundred Years of Marriage*, contains a lot of biography. Here is an example.

The happiest time of my life was the Second World War when my father was away in the Philippines. I was four years old. My mother's sister had moved into our house with her two kids and their little dog, Fluffy because Uncle Howard had shipped out to Italy. We used to play war in the backyard. My cousin Howard Jr., seven years older than me, taught us three little girls to goose step and salute like Nazis and to make the screaming-bloody-murder cry of a kamikaze pilot crashing into one of our carriers. Fluffy went wild when Howard, up in a gnarled old peach tree, bombed us girls with green peaches.

My Aunt and my mother, two sweet mothers, were able to concentrate on their children as they never had before. They taught us to do the Charleston and play ukuleles. They helped us with costumes and sat in for serial games of Monopoly. Without the eagle eye of my father's discipline life was relaxed. The mothers peeled all the old greasy paper off the walls in the kitchen and put up big, beautiful pink roses. The man at the store had told them that rose wallpaper was meant for bedrooms, but they put it up anyway and painted the woodwork pink. Then they took my paternal grandmother's old walnut china cabinet and painted it pink too and the round oak table—pink like a birthday cake sittin' there in the middle of our rosy kitchen. They said they were wild women. They laughed like crazy and had to put down their paintbrushes to wipe their tears and blow their noses.

The men were far away and couldn't stop them.