

Best Friend

06-18-2013 by Harry Zirkelbach

Best Friend is a generic term. Impossible to nail down. It does have a hinge; the other must consider you equally honored. No exception. No betrayal. Know intimate detail about the other, and vice versa. Both know there are topics discussed never revealed to others. Fortunate are those who maintained a life-long Best Friend. Modern mobility makes this difficult. Still, best friends remain such forever, knowing the roadway of life may separate Best Friends, without destroying the breed. Having another Best Friend does happen, equally cherished, never a rival.

The gifted, blessed, shy, accepting, genius, saint, villain, hobo may have a Best Friend.

The relationship is unique, not limited by any barrier.

In the years before marriage, such a Best Friend appeared. He was an Irishman, name Bill. We shared a Denver rented room at 1302 E 12th Ave. We both had worked on a failed venture, remained in the same communication world.

Bill was graduated from Saint Johns Catholic University, in Brooklyn his home town. Later he enlisted in the Army, WW II, finished Officer Candidate School, chose the Infantry. He was skilled in leadership, strategy, charisma, courage; a failure in athleticism. Taking his troop on a forced march of any length he was certain to be returned in an ambulance, exhausted, feet bleeding, cheered by all for guts.

Eventually retired a 2nd Lt., for medical reason.

Bill enrolled at Columbia University Writing Graduate School. His intent., become an Editorial Writer for any New York Newspaper, add humor to the lecturing typical of Editorials. Regrettably, both the University teaching staff and New York papers limited humor to Comics. Teachers firm in criticism, commended the humor.

Bill and I became roommates because it saved money. This began when I worked collecting data for the 1950 Census, then laborer disassembling building, then as Policeman for the City and County. In these diverse roles, I met the cross-section of Denver. Epic encounters daily. We would share meals, and in unwinding Bill would gather gems from my rubble of recall. With that thought, write a short

story, edit, and that night mail it to a publisher. U.S. mail loved Bill; he always obtained a reply letter.

*Publisher replies were never tossed. Bill filed them. The majority, outright rejections
. The next category, those with praise, advise, rejection. Then, acceptance with check.*

He would be published all his life in small circulation periodicals. The reward, being printed, then stipends augmenting his 2nd Lt disability retirement.

*Bill never had an agent. Thus barred From submitting to the New Yorker magazine,
his favorite. However I was instrumental in Bill's obtaining a New Yorker check. In an Denver Post article I had sent Bill, there was a blooper on the reverse side. Bill submitted that to their Editors, they accepted, printed, and sent a check for \$25.00.*

Bill framed this, hung it over his desk, never cashed, sent me a check for half. Bill had achieved one lifelong goal, a paid New Yorker contributor.

In the early 1950s Bill returned to Brooklyn, never returned west. When his parents died, he moved to Chatham, Massachusetts, Cape Cod. In the 1976 Americas Bi-Centennial celebration, our sons Paul and Davis joined those festivities in Washington, New York and Boston, staying with relatives and friends.

In Boston, they called Bill, were treated to eastern hospitality, and seafood. As ever, they shared stories of their adventurous travel, the Zirkelbach family.

And in retelling me, I was joined for a final visit with Best Fried Bill who died in 1981.

*Today, in this room. we mimic Best Friends,
share ourselves and cherished memories through weekly readings.*

You would have loved Bill too.