

The Ghost of My Former Lover

By Marilyn Reeves

I've always been a bit skeptical about supernatural phenomenon, but that's not to say I don't get the creeps from time to time. Inexplicable sounds that seem to emanate from nowhere. A wicker basket that would shimmer and shake for no apparent reason. I have also experienced both visual and aural hallucinations – usually just upon waking.

One time, about thirty years ago, I woke from a dream to see a death's head skull hovering just inches above my face. Another time, I swear my little dog Cindy called out 'Mama' in the middle of the night. The mind is a mysterious thing and visions sometimes seems to manifest from without rather than within.

When I was in my early 40's, I met a man named Jim at the Mile Hi Church in Lakewood. A couple of years later, we started dating and that was the beginning of a romantic relationship that lasted for nearly two decades.

Jim was twenty years my senior. He was a master woodworker and a retired Lt. Colonel, who had served for over thirty years in the Air Force. His favorite cap was emblazoned with emblems from WWII, Korea, and Viet Nam.

He was a charming, if a bit rough-hewn old coot, who also happened to be bipolar. When Jim was feeling good, there were times when he would talk non-stop to anyone who would listen, even to perfect strangers. Sadly, the flip-side of bipolar disorder is depression, and during the last couple of years we were together, his mind totally succumbed to the dark side. I tried my best to listen to his grieving, and to help him anyway I could, but he was barely aware of my presence.

Depression is contagious. After a while I started experiencing symptoms of my own. So in 2005 I kissed him goodbye for the last time, and shortly thereafter he was sent to a nursing facility over on the Western Slope. I received word that Jim passed away in May, 2012, the very same week my father died.

While I think about him from time to time, he belongs to another chapter in my life and I have moved on to other things and other people. Or so I thought, until one day just a couple of weeks ago.

I usually take a nap in my easy chair after lunch, and on this particular day, just as I was waking, Jim was leaning on the arm of my chair. His face was right next to mine and he was staring at me quite intently. I screamed! An instant later he was gone, but I was deeply shaken. It was if I not only saw him, but could actually feel his presence.

So now I'm left to ponder: was it merely a hallucination, or did I really see Jim's ghost? The latter option is simply too creepy to contemplate.