



What the Body Knows

Friends and I went to see the documentary, *When the Garden was Eden*. I was captivated by this Knicks “dream team” of black and white players uniting Manhattan during a time of racial conflict. The movie audience and I cheered along with the fans as we watched the archived footage of the Knicks win over the Lakers. Then just as the audience erupted in a victorious roar I was stricken with a jolt of dread, a gut punch of grief.

As the crowd applauded I sat in stunned silence, trying to make sense of this inexplicable feeling that had overtaken me at the moment the Knicks won.

As we strolled to the restaurant I told my friends about the grief that had swamped me as I watched the film, a feeling I had yet to shake. Trying to discern what had happened, I asked, “Do any of you remember what year that was?”

Several guesses were offered—1969...1970...1971. Hearing that year—1970—I googled Knicks Championship and there appeared the headline, Knicks Win It! with the date May 8, 1970.

I know that date. It was the day after my mother died.

Once the date and my memories of it aligned, the footage of another “movie” played. I saw my nine-year-old self holding the May 8th newspaper. Below the fold was a photograph of my family’s smashed in station wagon. My mother, pressed inside what looked like an enormous accordion with all the air pressed out of it.

My aunt took the newspaper from me saying, “You don’t want to see that.” But I had seen it. My brain had no doubt parked it along with the headline that bannered above the fold that day—Knicks Win!

That moment of grief in the theater matched what I remember from that day—my brain knew the date, but my body knew the sorrow.

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