

## PHOENIX RISING

I sat in the front row in my pink beach chair, feeling the warmth of my two pairs of socks, several sweaters, gloves, hat, and scarf softening the cool breezes of the October evening. Surrounding me were friends and family of the beautiful young singer; friends, family and neighbors of the hosts; clusters of children trying their best to sit quietly on their blankets; and an assortment of dogs looking for scraps of food left behind by their picnicking owners.

The reason for the eclectic gathering was the idea of my twelve-year old grandson Gabe. As he told the crowd before the concert began, he wanted to give back to the St Francis Cancer Center for his dad's successful brain surgery earlier in the year.

My heart swelled with pride as this young man spoke so maturely of his dad's recent clear MRI results. He went on to thank everyone for all their help during his dad's recovery as well as for contributing so generously to the "Brain Aid" concert about to begin. He then gave the stage over to his Aunt Sara as she tuned her guitar for her first song.

Her sweet, light, clear voice sprinkled over the crowd like iridescent crystals falling from the sky. She stood on the homemade stage illuminated by clusters of multi-colored bright lights, with only her guitar for company.

The song was called Phoenix, a haunting tale of a young, grief-stricken woman's struggle with the loss of her lover. Sara had written it to help her resolve her own recent heartache. Yet I couldn't help but look at my son sitting next to me as she sang, "Like a phoenix rising slowly from the ashes, lies my story." For he too had recently risen from the ashes and his life story will hopefully now unfold for a long long time.

Thank you, Gabe, for giving your Grandmother an unexpected evening of life's ever evolving story of the power of giving back and the renewed love and understanding it generates to all who witness it.

Gwen Sibley  
Oct 2015