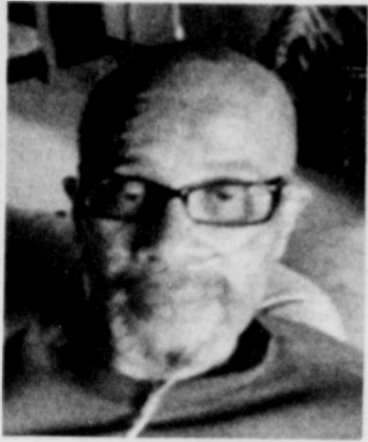


Dear Friends:



I am coming to you today on behalf of my brother, Mark Brock. He suffers from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). His lungs are failing and he is unable to do many things that most of us take for granted. Mark's doctors at University of Washington Medical Center have told us that his only option is a life-saving double lung transplant.

Which brings me to the purpose of this letter, not only is a transplant major surgery, it is also extremely expensive. Even with insurance, there are many expenses that are not covered and must be paid out of pocket. He will be on a life-time of anti-rejection medications. Mark will need to travel from Portland to Seattle and relocate for at least 3 months at the time of his transplant. This is where your help is desperately needed.

To help ease this financial burden, a fundraising campaign in Mark's honor has been established with HelpHOPELive, a nonprofit organization that has been assisting the transplant community for 30 years. All donations are tax-deductible, are held by HelpHOPELive in the Northwest Lung Transplant Fund, and are administered by them for transplant-related expenses only. So please consider making a donation today.

On behalf of Mark and our family, thank you for your kindness, generosity, support and prayers; Thank you, Kristina Booker, 503-281-6092

Please send donations to: **HelpHOPELive**
2 Radnor Corporate Center
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Radnor, PA 19087

Make checks payable to: HelpHOPELive. Note in memo section: for Mark Brock; For credit card donations, please call 800.642.8399 or visit helphopelive.org and enter Mark Brock in the "Find a Patient" box on the home page.

Tearing Up All Over Again

continued from page 9

Poppins were never really resolved. The film depicts a meeting of the minds that I didn't really believe while watching it and, sure enough, that part is pretty clearly fiction. This is itself a Disney film and it feels typically scrubbed and shiny, more sugar than medicine.

But the fact remains that Travers -- a middle-aged Londoner who had no love at all for the Disney mystique -- did agree to allow Disney to make the film. Why? The deal she got (which included 5 percent of the film's gross) set her up for life, but was it only about the money? She fought hard for her vision for the film through the years of its production, and insisted on coming to the Hollywood premiere (as well she should have) despite the fact that Disney did not invite her.

Even in the undeniably patriarchal world of the early 1960s, outmatched by Disney in money, power, and influence, Travers was no victim. Nor, indeed, was she a hero; she insisted on re-

cording her fights with the film's writers and, as you can hear from a sampling played during the closing credits, (a very nice touch) her demands were far from reasonable.

All that said, I re-watched the trailer while reading up on the back story, and teared up all over again, remembering the film's charms. For me, the film still works, though I'm at a bit of a loss to explain why. Here's my best shot.

I start with Emma Thompson. She lifts this material beyond what might otherwise have been a cheap comic contrast between a veddy proper Brit, unimpressed by the "jollification" endemic to Disney's world, and the folksy mogul. Her Travers is fittingly complex; many of her biting criticisms of that world are apt, even while she is being rude and offensive; she is a master at calling out artificiality, and she delivers the film's best lines with a perfect, precise zing that makes you laugh out loud but also wince at the thought of having to deal with her. She isn't exactly a feminist icon; she is quite unkind and self-centered, as was the real Travers. But she is also wounded, as many unkind people are. And she is a satisfying bundle of contradictions.

The film veers back and forth between the battle with Disney and Travers' troubled childhood. Although she saw herself as a relentless apologist against artificiality and sentimentality, Travers was herself a reinvention. She was not a British matron at all, but was born in Australia as Helen Goff (nicknamed Ginty).

She was deeply attached to her father, Travers Goff, a charismatic banker and hopeless alcoholic who perhaps nurtured her imaginative spirit but also hurt the family and died while Travers was quite young, leaving the family destitute.

During the troubled period of her life depicted in the film, Travers' mother attempted suicide and the family was assisted by a strong and brisk aunt who may well have inspired the character of Mary Poppins.

The film somewhat clumsily traces Travers' objections to the production to unresolved pain of her childhood losses and, despite the clumsiness, the connection resonates.

Colin Farrell, playing the father,

captures (particularly in the early scenes) the child's vision of a beloved parent. The young actress who plays Ginty (newcomer Annie Rose Buckley) embodies the attentive resoluteness of a child grasping for the comfort she has sometimes felt in the embrace of a parent who increasingly fails her. That pain is real and, although the film's depiction of the connection between childhood pain and adult behavior feels oversimplified, Thompson makes you feel that pain too.

In the film, Travers consciously recognizes how her past is influencing her, and so does Disney. I doubt that happened. But something like that frequently happens on an unconscious level in the artistic process, and it is magic. Much of the fun of the film happens in scenes depicting the creative process, when the vaunted songwriting team of Richard and Robert Sherman (beautifully played by Jason Schwartzman and B.J. Novak) bounce out tunes that were so beloved to me in my own childhood, which was also characterized by the failures of those to whom I was most deeply attached. Perhaps I bought the depiction of the prickly Travers (who insisted the film was not to be a musical) gradually softening as these good-hearted men woo her with "Let's Go Fly a Kite" because those songs still reduce me to tears. And not until seeing this film had I ever consciously connected the story to my own childhood pain.

It may well be that Travers, in all her selfishness and complexity, responded to the music and good-heartedness of the Disney version, even while bitterly protesting it to the end of her days. She famously cried at the Hollywood premiere, and most people say it was because she hated the film, not because she was moved by it, as this film suggests. But I suspect both may have been true. In my experience, a person can relentlessly insist on hard-headed realism, and still be stirred by a hopeful vision of what ought to be possible, and be buoyed by a heartfelt song.

Darleen Ortega is a judge on the Oregon Court of Appeals and the first woman of color to serve in that capacity. Her movie review column Opinionated Judge appears regularly in The Portland Observer. Find her movie blog at opinionatedjudge.blogspot.com

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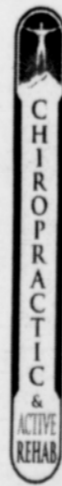
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