



On her first day home from the hospital, Mrs. Wetzel recounts her brush with death to her husband and their three daughters.

came with a hypodermic needle, and everything subsided. When I awoke, my husband was standing at the foot of my bed. He smiled at me and said encouragingly, "You're going to be all right."

It was a strain to hear all his words. I asked him to speak louder. Only after he bent and put his lips close to my ear did I realize he had been talking in his normal tone.

"My hearing is practically gone, isn't it?" I asked. "Nonsense," he said. "Stop worrying. You're going to be fine, dear."

I didn't know then that the doctors had told my husband and my brother that they held little hope for my life.

People who are struck by lightning either suffer minor injuries or die. The doctors feared I had suffered heart and brain damage.

MY MOTHER, a practical nurse for years, has since told me that her composure was completely shattered when she saw me for the first time. The sight of me lying with oxygen tubes in my nostrils and the awful yellow-brown cast of my skin convinced her I would be the first of her children to die.

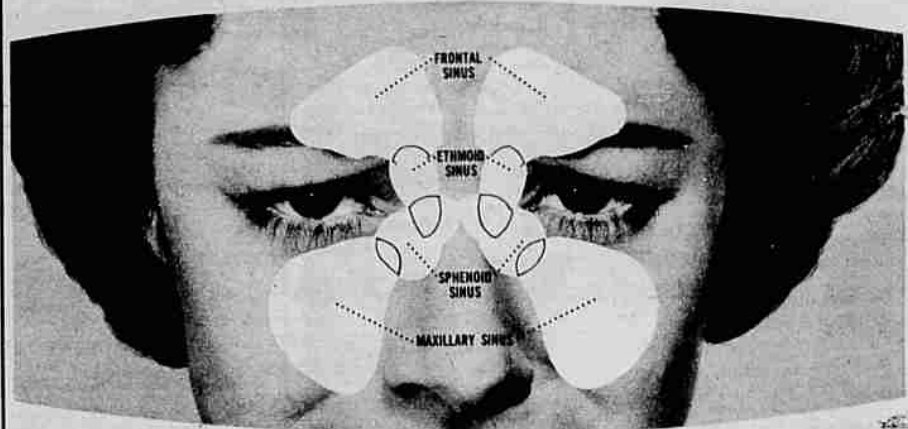
I was in the hospital a long time. Extensive tests showed no brain damage, and my heart repaired itself through rest and relaxation. Before I left the hospital, my hand was operated on, but I will never regain full use of it.

When the going gets rough, I remind myself how very close I came to not being here at all. It helps me to live with my hearing loss in one ear and with the fact that I must take frequent rests every day and cannot be the active mother I had been to my three daughters. But I look at my family and thank God for not taking me from them. And I thank Him for my brother's presence that day.

The amazed doctors told Gordon that when the lightning bolt struck, I must have died, at least by medical standards. Each time I ceased breathing while Okey was giving me mouth-to-mouth respiration, I died again. They said that only through Okey's efforts was I kept alive and that, indeed, I owed my life to him—not once but three times.

I keep thinking how fortunate I am that he saw that demonstration of mouth-to-mouth breathing. And I can only hope my story will lead others to learn about this great life saver.

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