



I was making a pot of our Mama's spaghetti sauce this afternoon when I started thinking about my brother, Ray. As much as we loved Mama's sauce recipe, we both adapted our respective versions to omit the heartburn evoking green peppers she always added to hers. I could almost see Ray rolling his eyes and fake belching. Remembering made me smile. It also made me sad. Ray died unexpectedly last Thursday, just a few days shy of his 53rd birthday.

My heart aches for the things we never got to say to each other, for memories we didn't have the opportunity to make together and for the meals we'll never be able to share. Ray was four years younger than I am and we were different in almost every way possible. He had a dark complexion, dark brown hair and even darker brown eyes. I'm fair with blue eyes and much lighter hair. We didn't like the same music. We were jealous of each other over stupid things. I was more interested in social clubs and pageants. Ray played baseball and won weightlifting awards. We had spats like felines for most of our lives. We'd hiss and spit and occasionally smack, then retreat to our corners and in a matter of minutes, the arguments would be over. Typical siblings, I suppose. When it came to the important stuff, we were very much alike. We both loved cats, historical



