# Family Pariah

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A sequel - Gargas faces sibling 'love'.

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# Family Pariah

Until now, I believed that I enjoyed positive relationships with my siblings. However, I recently confronted my isolation and fragility when faced with a family emergency: my mom had suddenly been admitted to a nursing home, never to return to her Montana farm home.

I travelled from Washington to see her. Although frail, she seemed to be in good spirits, with an unexpected sense of humor and feistiness, which manifested in her complaints about her food and new living conditions.

Reality dictates that I cannot compare my situation to hers - however, I must say that the culture shock of being in Montana rattled me (I don't get out much). Being in - now - unfamiliar cities and towns shattered me. Family that had not visited me in seven years regarded me with disapproval that I felt in my bones, that broke my spirit - the spirit that is the essence of me. Snowy weather in early October served only to exacerbate this burgeoning disconnect with my Self.

This visit finally confirmed for me that the concept of family is completely absent from my life. Of four siblings, not one issued invitations to me to visit them in their homes, although I have consistently issued invitations to them. (Many of them are more than ten years my junior and have more stamina for travel than I do.)

No one validated my words, gestures, or opinions; instead they spoke harsh words in return - words that belittled me and my lifestyle. The writing is clearly on the wall - in bold print. So, no longer will I invite my siblings to visit me.

I know my place: I am the family pariah.

At least my aged mother, who in her hospital bed with raised bedrails now resembled a baby in a crib, gave me a pair of new shoes as a good-bye gift.

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