

When the Cancer Came
By Cole Watson

With a time of ten minutes and forty-two seconds, my first race of the season qualified me for the California Interscholastic Federation finals for the 3200/ 2 mile. I had trained all summer and had not missed a day of running for almost a year. Although I continued training harder than ever, my times got progressively slower over the season.

Something was wrong with me.

My legs began to ache so much that I was not sleeping right. I became withdrawn and quiet. The doctors told me I was running too much. Nothing in this world could stop me from running, or so I thought. There had to be another reason why my legs hurt, I knew it wasn't from running. Then one day when I was working out at Kung Fu, I found the tumor. It was a golf-ball size lump sticking out of my back on the right side where my kidney is. My quack doctor told me it was a torn muscle sheath, and later called my mom and me liars, and claimed he had said no such thing. My doctor casually referred me to a specialist who made me an appointment for a month later. My mom had to watch me suffer for three weeks until finally she called the specialist and said it was an emergency. I had never felt so much pain in my life.

By the time I got to the specialist, the tumor was softball sized, and the pain was constant agony. I was limping. The doctor saw me and told me he didn't know who told me it was a torn muscle sheath, but if he had to guess anything, he would say it was a tumor. I was referred to Childrens Hospital Los Angeles and was on chemotherapy a week later. The protocol for treatment was six rounds of chemo, surgery, then six more months of chemo. I can never forget the horror of chemotherapy, though daily I try.

Cancer left me crippled. I can no longer run. It all happened over night. I was just a normal kid, and suddenly I was fighting for my life. I will never forget how cancer broke my spirit. I was quiet and hateful. I yearned to die, but no freedom came.

I no longer want to die, and I have endeavored to endure my life of suffering. Yet, even though I'm an extremely happy person now, I still find myself wondering almost daily... How did things end up like this? The best thought I have about that question is.... It was just my turn.