

## Chapter 1 - The Crash

I remember all of the emotions, the trees whipping by, everything happening so fast, dad yelling, *Here we go*, and mom screaming, *Stop it*. I remember my brother Zachary looking back at me, his eyes bright with fear as I prayed *God please...*

I remember the sense of something coming; you know it's coming and wonder: will I live?

I remember the violence of the plane plowing into the ground as we attempted an emergency landing in a roughhewn field...*Boom, boom, boom...* and then nothing but an unnerving silence.

I don't know if I blacked out or merely paused with my eyes closed in the stillness of those first few moments. Awareness comes slowly. Then in a rushed breath of shock and revelation, *Thank God I'm alive*.

My eyes open to an eerily lit silence where sunlight and shadow intermingle, making it difficult to see into the new geography of the plane's interior. My head and body buzz. My mind trips on the dissonance of dangling upside down, held a few inches from the ceiling of the plane's cabin by my seatbelt.

Taking stock of my body, I notice that I peed my pants and there is a small cut on my left arm. Looking up, I see that one foot is missing its shoe. My eyes squint into bright sunlight that passes through a relatively large doorway next to me that was torn open.

The only noise to break the silence is the erratic popping of electricity; the final groans of a dying airplane.

I move my arms first and then my legs, which causes small shards of glass to fall from where they're lodged in my clothes and upturned seat. I tilt my head back toward the ceiling beneath me and it is covered in broken glass.

My hair dangles down away from my face, but the position of my body and the way sunlight cuts through the cabin makes it difficult to see much of the plane. In those few seconds I realize that I am okay and begin to think that maybe we are all okay; that the crash wasn't so bad.