

## “If I die tomorrow, God is still in control.”



By Tejaswini Sudhaker (Teja)

Photos submitted by Janet Bunge

Why am I blessed?

I am blessed because I have Erdheim-Chester\* disease. I am blessed because I have Histiocytic Sarcoma cancer. I am blessed for this rarity, this part of me that makes people listen. I am blessed because despite everything, my smile never fades. And while the cells in my body rebel against the rules of nature, I am blessed to rebel against what everyone says about sickness.

I am blessed to have the spots on my skin and the ache in my bones. I am blessed that they mark me, like a tattoo, and they tell me that I am strong. They tell me that I have made it this far. I am blessed because they tell me to keep going.

I am blessed to have this new house, and these new neighbors. I am blessed because even after twenty six years of memories, I can still remember what new feels like. I can still remember.

I am blessed to travel. I am blessed to see new things, and meet new people, even if it is for a reason that many may disdain. I am blessed because I can still see the beauty in the world around me.



I am blessed to have a voice. I am blessed to have an audience that listens to it, that believes everything I say. I am blessed to have a reason to speak.

I am blessed to have family that understand. I am blessed to have grandchildren who know empathy, who know that there is a world outside of themselves. I am blessed to have a dog who is always

there at the end of the day.

I am blessed to have faith. I am blessed to have faith in myself, and in my children, and all the people in my life. But most of all, I am blessed to have faith in God.

Every day, the world gives us one thousand reasons to give up. The world shows us fear, shows us sadness and failure and rejection. The world has shown me sickness.

Every day, the world gives me one thousand reasons to give up. But I never do.

Why am I blessed? I am blessed to live.



*Janet Bunge is a retired nurse who is one of only 500 people in the world who has Erdheim-Chester disease. Her condition caused her to move out of her home of 26 years and into the Beaumont community. Despite the change that sickness has brought into Janet's life, she welcomes each new day with open arms, and keeps the things that truly matter to her close by. This passage was written based on her everlasting optimism, and her radiant smile. Maybe we all have something to learn from Janet.*

***\*a rare disease characterized by the abnormal multiplication of a specific type of white blood cells. As described by Janet herself, "The white cells go have a party and I think they drink beer and never leave."***