



## 14 Days: A Mother, a Daughter, a Two-Week Goodbye

**Lisa Goich**

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*A daughter's heartfelt recollection of her last days with her mom, with a poignant introduction by Mitch Albom.*

Lisa Goich was there to witness all of her mother Millie's final days, and she shares them openly, without moralizing. Goich's story begins December 11—two days after her mother entered the hospital after a debilitating fall, and when she decides to stop dialysis—and continues until December 24, when her mother passes away. The holiday timing gives the story added emotion and weight, but Goich lightens the load by opening each chapter with an apt, sometimes playful, Christmas carol lyric. The foreword sets a deep emotional tone: it's a letter of introduction that Millie can present at the gates of heaven, written by Millie's friend Mitch Albom. With such a story, sentimentality is unavoidable, but Goich doesn't revel in it: she lets each moment carry the necessary emotion, without overburdening it with meaning. And her mother's determination and cantankerous spirit help keep Goich—and the narrative—from wallowing.

Goich's first-person storytelling is focused and full of voice—using fragments for emphasis and rhythm, and employing laser-sharp descriptions (“her Edith-Bunker-meets-Fran-Drescher voice”). At times, both author and audience feel lost in minutiae, but the significant and insignificant details pull the narrative forward and convey the sense that Goich is both savoring the moments and willing the narrative not to reach its inevitable conclusion.

Goich's story is wholly her own, but her experiences are relatable and her emotions will resonate with others who've suffered loss and cherished last moments. The narrative has familiar elements of family stories—like sibling personality conflicts and parental stubbornness—all woven around an intense core of abiding love. Her story will connect with adults who have experienced the bewildering nostalgia of returning home as an adult. Goich straddles a line common to middle age: she's caught between the roles of a child losing a parent, and a caretaker for the dying and those left behind—especially her father.

*14 Days* is a clear-eyed (except for the tears) look at loss and familial love.

MELISSA WUSKE (Fall 2015)

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