



# Rachel Marie Roman

MAY 20, 1995 - APR 30, 2018



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# Rachel Marie Roman

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**R**achel Marie Roman passed away at the age of 22 in Pine Valley, California. Her family loves her and cannot imagine their lives without her. She was born on May 20th, 1995 in San Diego, California to Mickey and Nancy Roman. Rachel was fighting depression for several years. One of her aunts wrote a story about the Rachel's passing, and the family wants to share it here.~~~~~Written by Susan Badaraco This is what shock looks like...One dog was missing Monday morning. My sister opened her daughter's room to see if he spent the night with her. She saw the dog leaving the room but her focus was on Rachel—who was lying on the floor in a fetal position. One foot was oddly discolored, she thought it was a trick of the light that made it look so purple. She touched Rachel—only to find that her skin was ice cold. My sister didn't scream or cry. She sought out her husband and asked him to come with her. Numbly, they called for help...My phone rang Monday morning and I smiled when I saw my sister's name pop up. The voice on the other end of the line was all wrong. I can't remember what I said when their neighbor explained that my niece was dead. But I remember her voice repeating over and over again..."I'm sorry...I'm sorry...I'm sorry". I didn't know what to do. I went to work, opened the back door and only got as far as the phone room. I needed to alert them that I would be leaving town so they could adjust the schedule. I opened my mouth and nothing came out. And then I sobbed. And had a hard time stopping. I didn't know if I should go to my sister right away or wait till she asked for me. Suddenly, my flesh and blood sister became a fragile shimmering soap bubble that I needed to insulate and protect but I couldn't figure out just how to do it. I was so very afraid that I would do something wrong and she would just shatter. Because what parent can survive the death of their child? This is what grief looks like...My brother in law told me that when my sister saw the three of us arrive from out of town, it was all suddenly, distressingly...very real. Up until that



moment, it was like watching a movie, and it was impossible to believe that her daughter could actually be dead. I watched her face crumple when I walked through the door. I saw her shuffle from one to the next sister until she reached me. I felt her body quiver with pain as I wrapped my arms around her shoulders. There is very little you can do to help someone that has experienced pain like this. So you do the ordinary, the simple tasks that keep you both occupied. The morning after she found her daughter on the floor, my sister took a shower to help her wake up after a sleepless night. She entered the chilly kitchen with a pale face and wet hair. I walked her back to the bathroom, lifted up section after section of her thick hair to blow it dry while she stared at herself in the mirror with vacant eyes. The pain comes in waves. We'd be talking about the dogs (one of them was Rachel's), a succulent planter I saw in a restaurant (Rachel always wanted one) food (they had leftovers of one of her favorite dishes still in the refrigerator)...anything and everything had the potential to make my sister freeze up as the knife sliced through her heart all over again. This is what depression looks like...My niece has suffered from depression for over ten years. She died before her 23rd birthday this month. One in five people will experience depression at some time in their life. Most recover with support and sometimes medication. Some are not as lucky. My niece was seen by a variety of specialists and despite some periods of normalcy, the depression would eventually return, stalking her relentlessly until her death. She tried both prescribed medications and then illicit drugs. She drank alcohol. When she was hospitalized after a suicide attempt several months ago, the physician counseled her on the drug use. "It's not about the drugs," Rachel told him emphatically. I believe her. While the depression ruled her life, I never got the sense that the substance abuse did. It seemed too purposeful, done carefully to avoid detection. But while it might not have controlled her life, it did end her life. Rachel took a syringe to her arm and injected a substance that she thought was heroin. Maybe it was. There have been reports of fentanyl being sold as heroin in the area where my niece lived. Fentanyl is 30x more potent than heroin and if that is what Rachel injected, she would be yet another victim of the dramatic surge of overdoses due to drug dealers who substitute one drug for another. But regardless of what went into her vein, I still believe the real killer's name



## Obituary

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was depression. This is what love looks like... When Rachel's pregnant sister arrived at the house and couldn't find the strength to get out of the car, one of my sister's threw open the car door. She hugged my niece fiercely, whispered into her ear and ignored the rain that dampened her clothing. Later, when the two of them sat together on the sofa, I heard my sister tell my niece — "I've got you. I won't let go." Casseroles from neighbors, phone calls from friends, cards, flowers, coffee at 4 am when my sister could not sleep... But surpassing any tenderness that was shown to the family, it was the stories of love that Rachel shared with others during her short life that really made an impact on me. Alongside the ocean that Rachel adored, her friends and family gathered to say goodbye this week. What I learned from them was that Rachel never let the misery that she was going through keep her from doing good. In fact, I believe Rachel's illness helped her to be more sympathetic and kind to others. She bought food for those between jobs, encouraged those suffering from anxiety, supported others who were trying to define themselves and defended those who needed a protector. Rachel loved passionately. She would not allow her parents to depart for bed without giving them each a hug, every single night. Rachel's aunt said that in Russia, where she came from, it's not common to say the words "I love you". The last time Rachel hugged her aunt, she was taken back when Rachel said those very words to her. We need to say those words more often, her aunt declared to all of us. I love you Rachel.



## Tribute Wall

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AN

**Andrea** posted:

Can her mom or dad contact me? We were in rehab together. I treated her like my own child. See was amazing. I love her so much. Andrea 989 476 0164

July 11 at 12:54 PM

CH

**Christi** posted:

Hi, I was a friend of Rachel. We went to rehab at ararora together. I could never forget the first time we talked, she was almost like a light that was placed in my life. She introduced herself and I did too and immediately we clicked. She has an amazing personality that I clung to. She was always the first person I'd go to if I needed to talk to anyone because she was always willing to listen to what I had to say. She has such a big heart and she was so kind to me. We use to just talk and talk and she always made things feel so comfortable when I was around her. We would be detoxing but she always made it seem like it wasn't so bad and that at least we had each other's backs. I love that about her, I knew she always had my back even though it was just rehab. Sometimes, it got lonely but we always had each other to lean on and I will never forget that. That light about her. She is dearly missed and I regret so much that I didn't go to her 30 days almost month after she got out because I was busy but I will always remember her smiling face and how amazing she was for getting those 30 days and for putting a smile on so many peoples faces. She was the real deal, a really good person that is so dearly missed. I'm so sorry I wasn't there for you more. – christi

July 11 at 6:29 AM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Rachel by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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