

*Part I*

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# HEAR US

*"Tiny tumors staked out their territory..."*

Joan Thomson

Pat Forsing

## **FIRST YOU TAKE A DEEP BREATH**

First you take a deep breath--

"There's been a change in your mammogram--"

"We're going to need to do a biopsy--"

"We recommend a modified radical mastectomy,  
followed by chemotherapy AND radiation--"

"Let's face it, the cancer has been there a long time--"

"Seven out of eight lymph nodes involved--"

When you're 59, you've already started to  
contemplate your mortality. The questions of how,  
where, and when are strongly reinforced by the  
memory of your only sister's death of breast cancer.  
Long drives with Bob, not talking, afraid to listen to  
music that may provoke tears, memories. You feel like  
you've boarded a runaway train:

Who was it? Some actress dying of breast cancer  
is quoted as saying "I'm not afraid to die--I just don't  
want to die of cancer." Sums it up pretty well, huh?

*Pat Forsing of Raymond was an accountant for the town of Salem, NH, until her retirement. She is now a volunteer on the New Hampshire American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) State Legislative Committee, of which she is secretary. She has worked closely with Violet Constant, AARP representative to the NH Breast Cancer Coalition.*