

Ode to SNAP-Ed

By: Leah Brown MS RDN LDN

You were birthed out of necessity.

The powers that be, once dedicated

to the health of its nation;

their constituent's longevity.

But now with levity,

they have cast you aside.

You were the first child I was given

the chance to truly care for; passed on to

me to help you grow and thrive.

At the very least maintain your health.

My foster child. You were young,

when I had to leave you.

There wasn't anyone for me to sign

you over to, so you were passed around

to others, who didn't truly know you.

But did the best they could for you.

I would never have left you.

But life for me at the time was no

crystal stair.

So, I dared to dream a new dream.

Not knowing that after 5 years of grace,

I'd have the opportunity to

reconnect with you.

This time adopting you and your sister.

Fully committed to renourishing you back

to what you were before I left.

Now my second tour of duty.

But somehow today I am standing

over you at the coroner's office.

They say the cause of death, greed.

Steeped in, we want, what we want

and others will have to just figure it out.

Your aunts, uncles and I fought so hard

for you, while you were on life support.

Having to tell your 90 million beneficiaries

that you wouldn't be back next year,

has been the hardest because we know

they don't truly understand.

Instagram: @therealbeepoetry and @lbmusicnpoetry

Many of your assets pulled or made
unrecognizable leaving only a modicum
of your existence behind.

Those who will suffer from your absence
the most, particularly, the babies, the
toddlers, the children and who will never
know what it is to don a Kid Chef's hat.

Or be introduced to veggies that their
parents have never even seen.

The start of a Love Story between a kid
and his greens.

The elderly who learned from you how
they could afford their medication and
still afford to eat REAL nutritious foods.

A las what happens to a dream deferred?
Langston once asked. I can tell him that,
this festers like a sore.

Because here I am doing the
unimaginable, laying you to rest.
It is unnatural.

You should have carried on long after
I was gone.

Although you were adopted, it was like

you were my own.

Bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.

You should still be here.

I shouldn't be picking out caskets.

Seven years, I had with you total.

Do you know I came back just for
you? I'm sorry I didn't tell you
how much... I loved you.

I have been grief stricken since they
reported you were fading back in May.

It has been all I can do to muster the
strength to smile and say everything will
be ok.

You were only 33 years old.

And as I release you. I smile now
because I realize I know someone else
whose ministry ended at the age of 33 too
And what He left behind still guides
us to this day.

You are and were a legend.

These are my Flowers to you.

Thank you SNAP-Ed for every
hard working family you taught how to
shop for healthy foods on a budget.

Or for every cooking demonstration you
did to make sure people knew how to
make the fresh fruits and vegetables they
were unfamiliar with...

Or the shelf stable box of food they
received from their local pantry.

Thank you for teaching children and
adults how to read a Nutrition Facts
Label and Ingredients Lists so they could
know the difference between whole
foods and heavily processed foods and
make the healthiest choice.

Thank you SNAP-Ed for every Re-Think
Your Drink class that made people go
home and pour out the soda they had in
their refrigerator because they learned
how much sugar they were consuming.

Thank you for all the young Dietitians, like
myself, dietetic interns, nutrition
educators, community leaders,
cooperative extensions, food banks, and
researchers, you gave a job and a chance
to.

We deeply miss you already. And for
those who refused to see your worth, we
hope one day they will understand the
void we are left with.

Thank you again.

Goodbye.