

Sample Interview Responses – S. Lee Davis

The title, *The Girl in the Window*, carries so much weight. Why that image? And why was it important to center the story on her?

I think the title captures the anonymous, silent version of myself I carried for so many years. I was that girl—watching the world from the sidelines, unseen, unheard. The image on the cover reflects the darkness I lived through. Centering the story on her was important because... she's me. This is my story. But it's also the story of anyone who's ever felt trapped behind a pane of silence, waiting for someone to see them.

You write with such quiet power. Was it difficult to return to those moments as you wrote this memoir?

Absolutely. There were so many times I ran headfirst into a memory and had to close the file, step away, and come back later—sometimes much later. Writing this wasn't just storytelling—it was surviving it again.

There's a line in the book that really lingers: "No one came to help." How did it feel to put that truth on the page?

It's strange—I didn't fully realize how true that was until I began writing and looking back. As a child, I didn't question the silence. But now, as an adult, I can see it for what it was. And yes... that was the truth. No one came. Writing it down gave voice to something I had never dared say out loud.

What was the tipping point—the moment you knew you had to tell your story?

I began this story over 20 years ago as part of a journaling and healing process. It came out in third person naturally, almost as if I needed that distance at first. I never knew if I'd publish it—it lived in a file cabinet for a long time. But over the years, I came to understand that sharing trauma is no longer something to be ashamed of. In fact, telling the truth can help others find their way out too.

You're a nurse, a mother, and a grandmother. How have those roles shaped your voice as a writer and survivor?

Of those roles, I became a mother first—and that changed everything. Becoming a mom helped me recognize that what I went through wasn't normal, and it wasn't okay. Nursing

came later, at age 38, but it gave me a deeper understanding of human suffering. I've sat with patients and families during the worst days of their lives. I've seen pain that mirrors my own. Being a nurse reinforced what I already knew as a mother: trauma is far too common, and silence helps no one. As a grandmother now, I feel immense joy—and a fierce desire to protect the next generation from the kind of silence I endured.

So many people carry unspoken trauma. What do you hope *The Girl in the Window* offers them?

I hope it gives them a voice. Even before publishing, just by sharing that this book existed, people in my own circle started opening up. They told me they felt seen. Validated. That's everything I could hope for.

Memoir writing is brave and often controversial within families. Were there moments when you feared the consequences of telling your truth?

Of course. I was only four years old when my father died, and some of the earliest memories involved older siblings. I used a bit of creative license in places—not to distort, but to fill in gaps. For a long time, I didn't tell anyone in my family that I was writing this book. But now they all know, and to my surprise, they've been incredibly supportive.

Did anything surprise you as you moved through the writing process—memories, emotions, moments of strength?

Yes and no. I knew going in that certain memories would hit hard. I was prepared for the emotional toll. But I wasn't prepared for the strength I found in writing through it. The process didn't just reopen wounds—it started to close them.

What books or authors helped you survive or heal during your own journey?

Forgiving What You Can't Forget by Lysa TerKeurst, and *Healing the Shame That Binds You* by John Bradshaw. Both helped me name things I hadn't yet put into words.

If you could speak directly to your younger self—the girl looking out the window—what would you tell her now?

I'd help her find her strength sooner. I'd tell her she's not broken, not invisible. I'd whisper that her voice matters—and to never stop chasing the life she dreams about.