Sister Suzie

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Informant:
Michelle Lund is the mother to me and my two siblings. She was born and raised in Millcreek Utah and currently resides in Holladay Utah. Michelle is the type of person who is very outgoing and loves to talk to and be around people. She has her own circle of friends that she is always doing something with, whether it be going to lunch or a group vacation. In her work as a designer for a building company, she meets many people and is constantly making connections. She is very personable and outgoing. Michelle is also known within her group of friends to always have a connection somewhere or know some information that one is looking for.

Context:
This story was given over a facetime call while I was here in Logan. I asked my mom the question of why she calls me by the nickname “Suzie,” a question she has been asked on multiple occasions by multiple people. The name has always been a part of my life but I never questioned why she called me Suzie until recently. I never thought it odd even though my full name has no connection to Suzie.

The Grandma referred to in the story is my Grandma Lund who passes away when I was four years old. She was a very active part of our lives and I have fond memories of her even though I was so young. Having this nickname has been a way for us to keep the memory of my Grandma alive for so long. Who is called Suzie is completely dependent on my mom. She always calls me Suzie and sometimes calls my cousin Malorie Suzie. More often than not she will only call me Suzie and I will always respond without hesitation. It has the same effect as calling me by my first name. Often people will not understand how I so instinctively respond, but it does not seem odd to me.

In high school I played volleyball competitively. I played for a high school team in the fall and a competition league in the spring. My junior year of high school, a new teammate came and her name was sister. She had all brothers and was the only girl, thus the name Sister. The nickname of “Sis” transferred from me to her in my mom’s perspective. How this was collected (the timing and location) was not that unusual or out of context as collecting other pieces might be.

Text:
Me: So, why do you call me Suzie?

Michelle: Hmm, because Grandma used to call you Sister Suzie, you and Malorie, your cousin.

Me: Why did she do that?
M: I, really don’t have any idea. She’d just used to call you Suzie so I’ve always called you Suzie. I called you Suzie until, um, well I’ve always called you Suzie. I used to call you Sis for a long time because, Matt called you Sissy when he was little and then I had to quit calling you Sissy when, or Sis when you were playing volleyball with Sister ‘cause she was Sister. So that’s why I stopped doing that. But yea you were called Sister Suzie because Grandma always called you that.

Me: That’s funny. Did she call anybody else Sister Suzie?

M: Malorie

Me: Just Malorie

M: Yeah, that I remember.

**Texture:**

When asked the question of why Michelle calls me Suzie, she paused in a very thoughtful way. At first, when she entered the conversation, it was in a very casual way. She leaned against the couch to talk to me (because I was on my dad’s phone), but when she was asked the question she looked away in contemplation. The answers she gave were sincere. The main focus and explanation of this nickname was focused on the relationship it has to my deceased grandmother. In referring to the idea of the nickname Sis, she was light-hearted in her tone. It was a more “matter-of-fact” tone that Sister’s name was meant to be Sister. The nickname did not seem like something unusual or uncommon when she was describing it. In explaining the “why” of such a common and well-known thing, it took some reflection and story-telling to help Michelle understand why as well.