

My name is Kathleen Collins (Goldsmith)

On May 4th, 1970, I was a Kent State freshman. On that day I went to the rally as a curious observer, just beginning to understand the issues surrounding the Vietnam War.

Retreat to Safety

4 dead, 9 wounded, multitudes traumatized

A 19 year old freshman art major, nearing the end of the school year

Dove behind a vehicle in the Prentice Hall parking lot as gunfire erupted in unison from National Guard rifles

When it was over, walked in a daze back to my room in Beall Hall

Campus hurriedly evacuated a few hours later with buses, cars, any means possible

Rode to Ohio University where I was met by my boyfriend, a third year student at Miami of Ohio

Telling what happened to blank, disbelieving faces

Shock at the betrayal of Kent State and it's young people by the Republican governor

Confusion over "Greatest Generation's" desire to send it's children to Vietnam, and derision and hatred towards our generation for daring to question purpose of war

Distrust of authority lasting to the present (50 years)

Arrested personal development, abandoned dreams of art, poetry, and non-binary gender identification

Need for security, change of majors to Vet med, then Law

Marriage at the age of 21; good man, father of my children, later left by me for a woman

Personal growth stifled in 1970 had to come out eventually, and it did

At age 55, made my way out of closet I had entered in spring of 1970

Wonder now at what might have been
Who I would have become
Had I not retreated to safety

A moment in time, a cosmos of consequences
4 dead in Ohio