

The Best of Me ("My Four", 2012)

Houston Hodges, for Writer's Corner, WLRH Radio Huntsville, AL USA

<http://www.wlrh.org/PodcastFiles/120615-hodges-final.mp3>

You're the best of me, you four.

I knew you early on, right after a doctor, and your mother, and a couple of nurses -- when you looked exactly like Winston Churchill, all four of you -- you three guys, and even your sister, the first girl Hodges in seventy-five years.

I can see you in me -- each of you, each different, but sometimes with reminders of where you came from. You're the best of me.

Part of it, of course, is the way you look. Each of you got a headful of blondish hair, that might have been expected. Each of you got a different nose, but one which was handed down in the family. But how about the way you put on a sweater, or how you're ticklish in the middle of your back? The way you cock your head when you're crossed. The way you walk, especially when seen from the rear -- and you know, I've never seen me walk from that angle!

A larger part of it is the way you act, likes and dislikes, quirks and irks, that no one else would notice. How the self of you works. Why you like word-games instead of tag, the way you butter your bagel. How you relate to beets, why you threw up the sugar cube with your Salk polio vaccine on it. It's not a resemblance that anyone else could discern, it's subtle stuff. How you see two sides of a question -- or three. I have no clue as to whether those are in your genes or in your rearin', habit or imitation or bred in the bone.

You're the best of me, no doubt about it. Not that you're perfect, sister (or buster, whichever you may be). You make mistakes from time, and some of 'em are lulus -- but that's just one more way you're like me.

The Rev. Houston Hodges makes mistakes from time to time out at the Big Cove Presbyterian Church, over the mountain in Hampton Cove. But he

likes his offspring.