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*The Who Reflection* by Jill Sergent

The Who concert tragedy is personal, for all of us who have grown up in the Greater Cincinnati area. Growing up here, going to concerts at the coliseum and having family that was at that show particularly makes it very real for me. I've never had an experience even remotely like that at the Coliseum, but I have been in some frightening crowds at other shows. While I still have never experienced anything quite like that Who show, hearing the words of people that were there gives me chills. Every time I find myself in a precarious situation at a concert, the stories I've heard and the news footage I've seen always pop into my mind.

In this program, hearing the stories from people who were actually in the crowd is what is the most chilling, especially the woman who tells her story about fifteen to twenty minutes in. When she spoke about struggling for a foothold on the ground while she searched for her brother, I felt like I could see through her eyes. I've been in a crush at a show before, but it didn't have the edge of panic to it that I could still hear in her voice. I did have some issues with getting a toehold while everyone pushed to the stage and one of the people I had just become acquainted with passed out next to me twice. Even in all that, there wasn't the frenzy that the stories in this program have. We simply lifted him up and a few good people carried him out, with the crowd doing what they could to give them space. Those people in the crush at the Who concert never got that option because it seems like that crowd went from excited concertgoers to panicked mob with alarming speed.

Another person whose story really touched me was the man who spoke about halfway through the program. After he spoke about what happened to him that night, he talked about the lasting effects that night has had on him. It seems to me like that night took a bit of his innocence away. He lost a job, he's all but stopped going to concerts, and I believe has only been back to the Coliseum once in the last thirty years. His children even know the effect that night had because they called him from an event to assure him of their safety. That is shocking and incredibly sad. I can't imagine, being such a music lover, losing the want or ability to go to live shows.

No one wants to believe that tragedies like The who concert can happen in their city, at their show; that a gathering of music lovers can turn into a death trap, but all it takes is one spark. I think living here has given me a unique crowd understanding and perhaps a unique outlook on concerts in general. Having grown up with the memory of this night, stories like these will always make my heart ache.