



The Compassionate Friends

Eastern Jackson County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

July-August 2017

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July's Child

Fireworks race toward heaven
Brilliant colors in the sky.
Their splendor ends in seconds
On this evening in July.
"Her birthday is this Saturday,"
I whisper with a sigh.
She was born this month,
She loved this month,
And she chose this month to die.

Like the bright and beautiful
fireworks
Glowing briefly in the dark
They are gone too soon, and so was
she—
Having been, and left her mark,
A glorious, incandescent life.
A catalyst, a spark...
Her being gently lit my path
And softened all things stark.

The July birth, the July death
Of my happy summer child
Marked a life too brief that ended
Without rancor, without guile.
Like the fireworks that leave images
On unprotected eyes...
Her lustrous life engraved my
heart...
With love that never dies.
--Sally Migliaccio, Long Island, NY

From Sascha Wagner:

August

This summer runs to harvest—Do
you ask
How could a harvest be without my
child?
Friend, someday soon
the harvest in your life
will bring you home and wealth,
from love remembered.

Summer Soon...

Sunlight dancing on the branches
Of the birch tree at my door.
Meadow stretching smug and lazy,
Darker, greener than before.
Wind as warm as hugging children,
Clouds so round and very close--
And on one small grave their trembles
Lovingly an early rose.

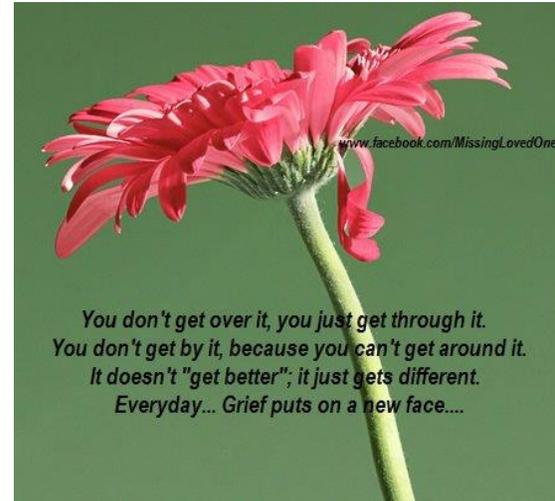
Summer wind

*The one who owns this summer is
not here,
not here to know the tender
summer wind,
not here to share the glowing and
the song.
The one who owns this summer
did not live
to touch the richness of this day,
this day in summer when you are
alone.
Weep to the summer wind,
weep and love again
the one you remember.*

Summer Breezes

There's a hint of girlish laughter
Wafting past the porch.
For a moment, I pause to listen.
In the warmth of summer sun
Memories are to bask in.
Trees you climbed, kites you flew,
Bikes you raced,
Waves you splashed in.
At night we wrapped time around us
As we blanketed the grass
And gazed toward heaven.
The stars were full of wonder then,
And lazy days seemed endless.
Life spread before you,
Laughter filling the wind with happiness.
Just now I thought I heard you
once again.
How pleasant this breath of summer,
The breezes hold such memories
Of life, of you.

--Karen Nelson, Box Elder County, UT



*You don't get over it, you just get through it.
You don't get by it, because you can't get around it.
It doesn't "get better"; it just gets different.
Everyday... Grief puts on a new face....*

Dandelions and Grass

Dandelions and grass
Clasped in a chubby hand,
Starry eyed, so pleased with himself,
Never a bouquet so grand;
Slightly wilted, with drooping
leaves,
Received as the rarest of blooms.
In my best vase on a cloth of lace
They proudly graced my rooms.

In the years to come, that same hand
Wrote a lovely poem,
Built a model airplane
And played the saxophone,
But ever in this mother's heart
In all the years that passed,
The loveliest thing that David gave
Was dandelions and grass.

--Joy C. Worland

When It Is Dark Enough, You Can See the Stars

Often it is easiest to see the stars in
the long, cold nights of winter. People
who have come through any kind of life
threatening event—a crash, a tornado, a
severe illness, the loss of a loved one—

speak of how it has changed their perspective, how it's easier to see what's important.

Several years after our daughter died, we experienced a burglary. All of our wedding silver was stolen, as well as antique pieces that had been handed down through many generations. Of course, we were upset. But right away the words came to me: "It's only things." I have no way of knowing whether or not I'd have been this calm if the theft occurred before her death, but I suspect not.

The stars are not only clearer, but more beautiful. Ancient navigators found their way through the seas by looking at the stars. So maybe the experience of loss not only helps clarify what is important to us, but also helps us know where we are and the direction in which we want to go.

--Charles Beard

The Sun Will Shine

I sat in the darkness in the living room, for dawn was only just arriving. Through the picture window I watched the trees slowly outline the opposite shore of our little lake. Then magically, a warm shaft of light appeared behind the trees, flooding the horizon with gold. "It will be a beautiful day for our picnic," I thought.

But as the daylight grew stronger, I saw that a thick, gray fog blanketed the lake and the lawn between it and the house. "Oh, no," I moaned, "I was so hoping for good weather." Then a ball of fire peeked over the horizon and rose majestically into full view. Within an hour it had burned off the mist, and the picnic day emerged bright and clear under the cloudless sky.

Life is like this, I thought, when grief ... darkens our days. It is then we must keep hope burning in our hearts. We must believe that if the sun is not shining at the moment, it will shine again, and we will have a richer appreciation of the bright days for having experienced the darkness.

--Madeline Robinson, *Twin Lakes WI*

I am a father who lost his only child to a drunk driver. Following are a few thoughts this Dad has for his beautiful son. I am sure that some of this makes sense to bereaved parents. I will continue to seek a meaning for all that has happened in my life. I really felt

singled out, but I know that what happens to people just happens. We are not being punished for something we have done.

The Last Cry

When you were taken, it became so dark. I could not believe it happened to us. I loved watching you grow, and you never knew why I was watching you. It was a father's love. There is no force greater in my soul. I tried to protect you from harm as best I could, but I could not protect you from another. It was not in your hands or mine.

As I live each day, I can't understand how life could have allowed us to be separated. If there is a God in the air, I wish to breathe fully. I think about you often—not daily, but hourly, sometimes by minutes or seconds. Sometimes I cry, missing your presence. I love your wit, your smile, and most of all, being your Dad.

I told you so many times to be careful and you were. But on that November night your actions were directed by others, and the outcome has caused so much sadness and pain. I wish I could just change one second of your life, and that is all it would take to save this LAST CRY.

I am not saying as I write this letter and cry that this will be the last cry. When my time comes, you will have gotten the LAST CRY. I will always save it for you. Someone said that tears flush out the toxins and poisons from the body, so I should live a long time. Rest assured when the last hour comes, you will have THE LAST CRY.

I love you so much, Dad

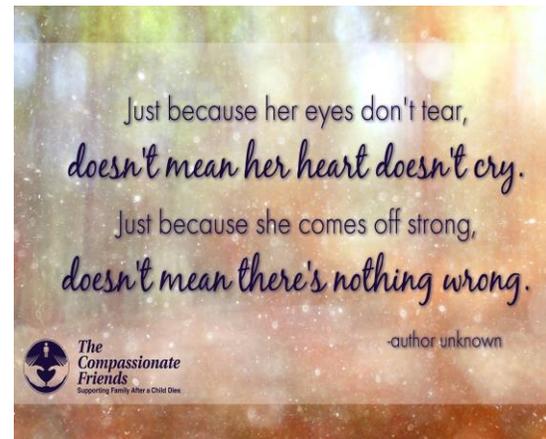
--By Mark Warren Sr., in memory of his son,
Mark Jr. (5/1/85-11/2/08).

*When you walk through a storm,
keep your head up high
And don't be afraid of the dark,
At the end of the storm is a golden sky
And the sweet silver song of a
lark.*

*Walk on through the wind,
walk on through the rain,
Though your dreams be tossed and
blown.*

*Walk on, walk on,
with hope in your heart,
And you'll never walk alone...
You'll never walk alone.*

--"You'll Never Walk Alone"
by Oscar Hammerstein II



Beach Havens

As the tide of grief goes down,
New beaches are revealed.
Their sand, it's true, is wet,
And barnacles protrude.
But wear your rubber shoes
(hot pink would be preferred).
Step dainty on the shore:
A storm thrown log will give you
rest.
Now sit and sun yourself,
And dream of those you love.

--Cathy Sosnowsky, TCF
North Shore, North Vancouver BC

It Might Have Been

I saw a red scooter go up the street,
And I rushed to the window,
tripping over my feet.
Neat, blonde hair blowing in the wind,
Then I knew it wasn't you, but...

It might have been.

Bicycles are parked in the yard below,
Not a one of them is yours, I know.
Still, I look to be sure again & again,
All the while my heart says,

It might have been.

I passed a car cruising, out in the sun.
It looked like yours,
they were all having fun.
But the driver I can see;
my thoughts must end,
But for a few moments...

It might have been.

The footsteps on the porch,
the knock on the door
Sound just like yours, but not anymore.
Still I run through the hall & into the den,
Looking out through the window...

It might have been.

All plans for the future,
all dreams in the past,
Are gone now forever,
they just couldn't last.

Fate came to visit, then death walked in,
Now all that can be said is...

It might have been.

A PRAYER FOR THE CHILDREN

We pray for the children
Who sneak popsicles before supper,
Who erase holes in math workbooks,
Who can never find their shoes.

And we pray for those
Who stare at photographers from behind
barbed wire,
Who never "counted potatoes,"
Who are born in places where we
wouldn't be caught dead,
Who never go to the circus,
Who live in an X-rated world.

We pray for the children
Who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls
of dandelions,
Who hug us in a hurry and forget their
lunch money.

And we pray for those
Who never get dessert,
Who have no safe blanket to drag
behind them,
Who watch their parents watch them
die,
Who can't find any bread to steal
Who don't have any rooms to clean up,
Whose pictures aren't on anybody's
dresser,
Whose monsters are real.

We pray for the children
Who spend all their allowance before
Tuesday,
Who throw tantrums in the grocery store
& pick at their food,
Who like ghost stories,
Who shove dirty clothes under the bed,
Who never rinse out the tub
Who get visits from the tooth fairy,
Who don't like to be kissed in front of
the carpool,
Who squirm in Church and scream in
the phone,
Whose tears we sometimes laugh at and
whose smiles can make us cry,

And we pray for those whose
nightmares come in the daytime,
Who will eat anything,
Who have never seen a dentist,
Who aren't spoiled by anybody,
Who go to bed hungry and cry
themselves to sleep,
Who live and move, but have no being.

We pray for the children
Who want to be carried and for those
who must,
Who we never give up on,

And for those who don't get a second
chance.

For those we smother and . . .
For those who will grab the hand of
anybody kind enough to offer it.

MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON AMERICA'S CHILDREN

*In memory of the children and teacher killed
in the shooting on Tuesday, March 24,
1998, in Jonesboro, Arkansas*



Summer Thoughts

Summer is a time when things naturally slow down, a time when many are waiting for the orderly routine of their lives to begin again. For those of us in grief whose lives are already in limbo, it can seem endless if we let it.

Seeing children, babies, and teenagers is not easy for us, & we see them everywhere from shopping centers to beaches. Everyone is out living, loving, enjoying carefree activities with their children, and we want to scream, "It's not fair!"

I was sitting on my patio one evening at dusk recently listening to the shouts of children playing, and I was crying as I remembered the sounds that my child used to make. I became very depressed as I thought what a long summer this was going to be. In my reverie, I remembered a recent comment that I had heard at a TCF meeting: "My child was such a loving, giving person. He would not want me to waste my life being bitter."

I also remembered a good friend telling me to "count my blessings" and naming all the things I had to be grateful for. I was furious at the time. Nothing I had to be grateful for could compensate for the fact that my child was dead.

Now, sitting in the twilight of this early summer evening, I began to see things differently. I determined that this summer would not be an eternity: I would not let it be. I decided first of all to stay busy. I know I can find plenty to do if I only take the time to look. I am also going to try to enjoy the simple things that used to give me so much pleasure, like flowers, and working in my garden. I then decided to try to be truly grateful for the blessings that I have, like my husband, my surviving children, my job, friends, etc.

It has been almost five years for me, and I know that last year this would not have worked. Of course, I still have times of sadness; I know I always will. But I have decided that in the process of grieving we close so many doors, the only way to recovery is to reopen them gradually at our own pace.

I know I will never be the same person I was before the death of my child, but I hope eventually in some ways I will be a better person because suffering can be beneficial if we learn & grow through it. A year ago I didn't feel that way, and I know I still have a long way to go. But in the meantime, I know the greatest tribute to my child will be to enjoy this summer as he would have done.

--Libby Gonzalez, TCF, Huntsville, AL

Sometimes

Sometimes

Memories are like rain showers
Sparkling down upon you
Catching you unaware
And then they are gone
Leaving you warm and refreshed

Sometimes

Memories are like thunderstorms
Beating down upon you
Relentless in their downpour
Leaving you tired and bruised

Sometimes

Memories are like shadows
Sneaking up behind you
Following you around
Then they disappear
Leaving you sad and confused

Sometimes

Memories are like comforters
Surrounding you with warmth
Luxuriously abundant
And sometimes they stay
Wrapping you in contentment

-- Marcia Updyke

Memories

Time can never erase,
The memory of your face;
Nor the passage of the years,
Stem the volume of my tears.

You are with me for always,
In my heart throughout all days;
Then in my dreams nightly,
Your star shines ever so brightly.

I want your spirit to remain,
Inside of me, despite the pain.
To forget you would be a curse,
Because no memories would be
much worse.

You were born a part of me,
Now you live within the heart of me;
Forever precious, forever young,
My beautiful, darling little ones.

*Jacquelyn M. Comeaux
In Memory of my angels, Michelle, Jerry
and Danny
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NO VACATION

There is no vacation from your absence.
Every morning I awake I am a bereaved
parent.

Every noon I feel the hole in my heart.
Every evening my arms are empty.
My life is busy now, but not quite full.
My heart is mended, but not quite
healed.

For the rest of my life
Every moment will be lived without you.
There is no vacation from your absence.
*Kathy Boyette
TCF, Gulf Coast, MS*

Whenever I think of Lisa,
I remember sun and sand and sea.
The beach, her favorite place by far,
She is there with me.
I remember her gently now.
The crippling pain is gone.
I've come to enjoy the beach again.
She lingers there in the sun.

--Gina Calvert, TCF, Louisville KY

You'll never ever be the same
after the trauma, after the pain
After some time and after the grief
after forever, and after belief
You'll never know why you lived
through this
How did you do that? How can you
exist?

But I think I can tell you and hope you
don't mind
that you have a choice you must make
down the line
You can lie dormant and be dead
inside
Or you can keep going, keep living
your life
Yes, you've changed forever but it's up
to you
to be there for others who still need
you too!
Your life can have meaning and you
can feel pride
right there by the sorrow and pain
that's inside
You can feel loved and glad you're
alive
and you know your loved one is there
by your side!

*by Jenny Donaldson Chad's mom South
Kansas City TCF*

I carried you for nine long months
looking forward to your birth
Little did I ever know
you'd never breath on earth

I'd made such plans for your life,
looking forwards to bringing you home
I never thought for one second
When I came home I'd be alone

They said there been some
complications,
they said that you had gone
I couldn't understand their words
What had happened? What had gone
wrong?

Now they don't want to talk of you
the people who drop by
They think that I should just accept
my baby's in the sky.

I'll keep a part of you with me
and everywhere I am you'll be
I know we'll meet again someday
Then in my arms you'll always stay

Every day I'll think of you
think of you with love
My precious little baby,
my angel up above.

R.I.P. Landon Shane Matthews
Every day is becoming more and more

and different and mommy is numb in
one place frozen with pain and hurt held
inside while the world just passes by!!! i
love you baby boy and can't wait until
I'm heaven with you to stay!! Rest easy
my precious little angel!!!

Ivory Jade Matthews

Upcoming events



**Save the date for our Fifth Annual
The Compassionate Friends
Walk to Remember
September 23, 2017 at Waterfall
Park, Independence, MO
Registration will start at 8:30 AM
Walk will start at 9AM
Watch your emails and the website
www.easternjacksoncountytcf.org for
more details.**

*For Remembrance dates please visit our
website at*

www.easternjacksoncountytcf.org

Find us on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1582699755290182>

*We have several volunteers who write
remembrance cards to families on
birthdays and death dates. Just a
reminder if you have an address change
please email phillipsplace@aol.com or
mail a note to TCF, C/O Theresa
Phillips 6200 Kentucky Raytown, MO
64133 so the roster can be updated.*

*Please remember that you can give to
The Compassionate Friends through
your United Way pledge at work or as a
single gift, but you MUST WRITE IT IN.*

*TCF asks for donations in memory of
our children who have died. Our
activities support the grief work of many
families. We also work to educate
members of our community about the
grief process & how they can support
bereaved parents.*

**Please help us help others. Make a
LOVE GIFT today. Tax deductible Love
Gifts may be sent to: TCF C/O Carol
Cavin 214 E Hansen Ct, Independence,
MO 64055**