 **July - August 2019**

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Summertime,

Vacation Time, Family Time

I’ll bet you never dreamed that there would ever be a time in your life when you would not welcome vacation from work…and the day-to-day hassles of routine living. It’s probably a shocker to you that the slow pace of summer, cookouts, softball games, etc., are now a nightmare. Everywhere we go, there are kids out of school enjoying their leisure time, and our bodies jolt as we search for our own absent child who enjoyed this time of the year with a passion!

Surrounded by summer fun, a bereaved parent needs only look around and there are painful memories at every corner. When we are faced with all the living, loving, happy families with their children, the anger boils within and we feel very cheated. And this year we are afraid to go back to the beach cottage we’ve visited every year, or to the favorite mountain retreat where we laid around for a week and relaxed, or the amusement park where the kids had to ride every ride and see every attraction, no matter what the temperature was. Yes, fear of our memories, fear of too much time to think, fear of too many kids, fear of bursting inside from our pain…all of these feelings are part of the first few years of summer vacations for bereaved parents.

It’s been nine years now for me, and I need to tell you that it will get easier, but I found that for the first few years I needed to consciously change some of my routines in order to deal with my fears. I could not visit the same places we had visited when Todd was with us. We tried new experiences in new places with new people. That isn’t to say there weren’t some downtimes; however,

the faster paced vacations worked better for us. I could not allow myself too much time to think. I enjoy those weekends away now, but for the first few summers I had to dig in the yard, repaint lawn furniture, rearrange the garage, and the multitude of busy projects we’d been putting off for the lack of time. That was a better vacation for me than forcing myself to go somewhere and feel miserable.

 You’ve read it a hundred different times; you have to find your own way and your own peace—leave yourself room to escape if it becomes necessary. If you can find any enjoyment and relaxation, relish it…you deserve it, and it does not mean you don’t care. It simply means you are healing. Now I walk down the beach and enjoy the solitude, or laugh when I see a toddler, or listen to the joy of kids laughing, and it warms my heart. Yes, Imiss him, but I know he enjoyed every minute of this season, and I know that’s what he’d want for me… and thank God, I can do it once more!

*--Brenda Holand, TCF, Concord, NC*

**Reflections in Sand and Time**

I looked across the lake, then onto the sand,

Wishing I was still standing there

Holding your small hand.

Sandcastles, buckets and shovels

Flashed into my mind,

As I remembered all those precious memories you left behind.

Tiny footprints took me many,

many years back in time,

But of those I looked at—

yours I couldn’t find.

But as I stood there

going so far back in the sand,

I almost could feel you holding my hand.

*--Linda Trimmer, TCF, York, PA*

#### Summer Delight

Where is the child that skipped through the sprays of summer rain and laughed his way into my heart…?

Where is the boy who climbed my trees and spied on me, scaring me half to death from behind the leaves…?

Where is the child with sun-tanned legs?

 who ran Fourth of July races?

 in green, green parks…

Where is the sleepy child who wrapped his arms around my neck and said, “When I grow up, I’m gonna marry you, Mom.”

He’s here –

He twines our past around my future,

 and takes me back home

 and makes me young again

 as sure as summer comes…

A sun-tanned spirit with an impish grin

 still whispers in my ear

 that stars are not stars at all

 but lightning bugs

 he’s captured in a jar…

In his eternal youth he is my summer’s glow,

 the sunshine in my garden,

*my comfort on long hot summer nights of remembering.*

*Where is the child that once played among my summer flowers?*

 *He darts and runs away*

 *as I idly dream of yesterday,*

*At once elusive, yet so near…*

*Oh, I’m sure he’s here*

*I’m sure I saw him just a minute ago*

*Or was it just a touch of summer madness that made me think*

*I’d greeted him…*

*Oh! Where is that child of summer gladness?*

*His laughter slides down summer rainbows and captures me with unbound glee…*

*His summer brownness runs barefoot on my heart…*

*With sun-bleached hair he smiles at me from photos from summers past,*

*And I remember love…*

--Fay Harden, Heartlines

**The Sandpiper**

*by Robert Peterson*

She was six years old when I first met her on the beach near where I live. I drive to this beach, a distance of three or four miles, whenever the world begins to close in on me. She was building a sandcastle or something and looked up, her eyes as blue as the sea.

"Hello," she said.

I answered with a nod, not really in the mood to bother with a small child.

"I'm building," she said.

"I see that. What is it?" I asked, not really caring.

"Oh, I don't know, I just like the feel of sand."

That sounds good, I thought, and slipped off my shoes.

A sandpiper glided by.

"That's a joy," the child said.

"It's a what?"

"It's a joy. My mama says sandpipers come to bring us joy."

The bird went gliding down the beach. Good-bye joy, I muttered to myself, hello pain, and turned to walk on. I was depressed, my life seemed completely out of balance.

"What's your name?" She wouldn't give up.

"Robert," I answered. "I'm Robert Peterson."

"Mine's Wendy... I'm six."

"Hi, Wendy."

She giggled. "You're funny," she said. In spite of my gloom, I laughed too and walked on. Her musical giggle followed me.

"Come again, Mr. P," she called. "We'll have another happy day."

The next few days consisted of a group of unruly Boy Scouts, PTA meetings, and an ailing mother. The sun was shining one morning as I took my hands out of the dishwater. I need a sandpiper, I said to myself, gathering up my coat.

The ever-changing balm of the seashore awaited me. The breeze was chilly, but I strode along, trying to recapture the serenity I needed.

"Hello, Mr. P," she said. "Do you want to play?"

"What did you have in mind?" I asked, with a twinge of annoyance.

"I don't know. You say."

"How about charades?" I asked sarcastically.

The tinkling laughter burst forth again. "I don't know what that is."

"Then let's just walk."

Looking at her, I noticed the delicate fairness of her face. "Where do you live?" I asked.

"Over there." She pointed toward a row of summer cottages.

Strange, I thought, in winter.

"Where do you go to school?"

"I don't go to school. Mommy says we're on vacation."

She chattered little girl talk as we strolled up the beach, but my mind was on other things. When I left for home, Wendy said it had been a happy day. Feeling surprisingly better, I smiled at her and agreed.

Three weeks later, I rushed to my beach in a state of near panic. I was in no mood to even greet Wendy. I thought I saw her mother on the porch and felt like demanding she keep her child at home.

"Look, if you don't mind," I said crossly when Wendy caught up with me, "I'd rather be alone today." She seemed unusually pale and out of breath.

"Why?" she asked.

I shouted, "Because my mother just died!" and thought, My God, why was I saying this to a little child?

"Oh," she said quietly, "then this is a bad day."

"Yes," I said, "and yesterday and the day before and—oh, go away!"

"Did it hurt?" she inquired.

"Did what hurt?" I was exasperated with her, with myself.

"When she died?"

"Of course, it hurt!" I snapped, misunderstanding, wrapped up in myself. I strode off.

A month or so after that, when I next went to the beach, she wasn't there.
Feeling guilty, ashamed, and admitting to myself I missed her, I went up to the cottage after my walk and knocked. A drawn-looking young woman with honey-colored hair opened the door.

"Hello," I said, "I'm Robert Peterson. I missed your little girl today and wondered where she was."

"Oh yes, Mr. Peterson, please come in. Wendy spoke of you so much. I'm afraid I allowed her to bother you. If she was a nuisance, please, accept my apology."

"Not at all -- she's a delightful child." I said, suddenly realizing that I meant what I had just said.

"Wendy died last week, Mr. Peterson. She had leukemia. Maybe she didn't tell you."

Struck dumb, I groped for a chair. I had to catch my breath.

"She loved this beach, so when she asked to come, we couldn't say no. She seemed so much better here and had a lot of what she called happy days. But the last few weeks, she declined rapidly..." Her voice faltered, "She left something for you, if only I can find it. Could you wait a moment while I look?"

I nodded stupidly, my mind racing for something to say to this lovely young woman. She handed me a smeared envelope with "MR. P" printed in bold childish letters. Inside was a drawing in bright crayon hues -- a yellow beach, a blue sea, and a brown bird. Underneath was carefully printed:

“A SANDPIPER TO BRING YOU JOY.”

Tears welled up in my eyes, and a heart that had almost forgotten to love opened wide. I took Wendy's mother in my arms. "I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry," I uttered over and over, and we wept together. The precious little picture is framed now and hangs in my study. Six words— one for each year of her life–that speak to me of harmony, courage, and undemanding love.

A gift from a child with sea blue eyes and hair the color of sand— who taught me the gift of love.

*NOTE: This is a true story. It happened over 20 years ago and changed Robert Peterson’s life forever.…This week, be sure to give your loved ones an extra hug, and by all means, take a moment...even if it is only ten seconds, to stop and smell the roses. Never brush aside anyone as insignificant. Who knows what they can teach us?*

**I wish for you, a sandpiper.**

**You Are Not Alone**

We know the heartache that you bear

We’ve felt the pain ‘cause we’ve been there

We share a bond of infinite sorrow

A hope for peace, strength for tomorrow.

A time will come when you’ll seek relief

Solace and comfort to ease your grief.

We welcome you, we shall be there

We understand. We’ve much to share.

*--TCF Scranton, Pennsylvania*





# SUMMER

Summer in Michigan can warm the heart and heat the body. There are soft silky nights spent viewing dots of light in the heavens. Beaches, barbecues, baseball, family reunions, fireworks, carnivals and cool drinks make the summer a special time of the year for a Midwesterner eager to shed winter’s coat. School’s out while vacations blend together for happy times. Even blue skies push the gray away in the peninsula state begging us to view, if not experience, the outdoors.

 Someone is not there in their normal place and the season of the year will never change that fact. Determination to make “things” better is a laudable, though often quite challenging goal. Having a good time between spring and fall may be a difficult task when a good day may be a notable achievement. The simple act of attempting to have fun may be a simple, innocent act of honoring our child’s memory. Every month seems to bring specific special thoughts and those fun times may bring along some unwanted baggage of sad moments that will never go away, but they will become more manageable, more easily carried.

 It seems that if we keep busy sometimes “things” get better even if it’s only for a little while. An idle mind is the devil’s workshop is another one of those phrases that seem to finally have some meaning for the bereaved. Find something, anything, to occupy the mind and the heart will most likely follow, if only briefly. If there is no time to think then there is no time for heartache, and this fragile formula may work on occasion to soothe the soul, providing rare relief from the staggering, stunning, seemingly endless pain.

 Other times it is just too overwhelming, too exhausting to keep one step ahead of the darkness that reality has inflicted. We are transported back to when “things” were different, normal, better, so briefly we let go of hope and that is ok, it happens. The fight for survival is not easy but it is possible. The struggle may be measured by where we have been, how far we have come, as well as where we are. Congratulate yourself for making it this far. We may share many similarities, but no one knows your hard road better than you.

 I think that our son Brian is having the best summer of all. That is what I choose to think, choose to know, choose to feel. So, when I close my eyes tonight, I will remember fireworks and sparklers of the past, the amusement parks yet to be visited. The happy faces of yesterday’s memories will visit while dreaming of the hugs of tomorrow in that most beautiful perfect summer, that someday forever summer, together.

### ~[PAT O'DONNELL](https://www.compassionatefriends.org/blog/author/pat-o-donnell/),

Brian’s dad



# FINDING A LITTLE PEACE ON A SUMMER NIGHT

 While most others love summer for its daytime pleasures, such as beach time, golf, picnics and other family outings, personally, I like it at night… on my deck after most others have long gone to bed.  I gaze at the silhouettes of the trees against a cloudless sky, with a sliver of moon and glistening stars as a backdrop and watch the fireflies dance and illuminate the blackness.  My senses are heightened as I listen to the tinkle of the wind chimes in the evening breeze, the gentle hum of the overworked air conditioner after a blistering hot day, the hypnotic chorus of crickets, and the mournful wail of a train whistle off in the distance.

 There is nothing like fireworks on the 4th of July (or any summer night, for that matter). Despite the noise, something about the “rockets’ red glare” makes me smile; brings back memories of more innocent times, not only my own childhood 4ths, but my own children at the yearly fireworks displays; the ooohs and aaahs as their eyes lit up at the beautiful sights…in those years long past, when we were a whole family altogether…long before we were…not.

 There was a period of time in my life that I felt no pleasure in anything…and never thought I would ever find anything to give me peace ever again. However, the stillness of the evenings now, more often than not, bring a sense of calm and peace to the end of an often-hectic day.  As a bereaved mom in the earlier years of my grief journey, I felt more serene in the dark of the night where the realities of life then felt less harsh and glaring. Though sometimes through my tears, depending on the moment, I’d lie on my back and peer into the heavens and attempt to fathom the enormity of the universe – wondering what lies beyond the celestial bodies.  And I’d think about Nina… if, in her new life, she now had an up close and personal view of Saturn’s rings. Or was she here beside me one minute with the ability in the next to be perched in the “W” of Cassiopeia, her favorite constellation?  Had my precious teenage daughter been to the top of the Eiffel Tower, looking down on Paris as she had dreamed to do one day?  Or was my police officer son, Chris, still guarding over the city he patrolled and still watching over it now from a whole different dimension.

 I like to believe that they both have and still do. and the tranquility of a summer night gives my body rest, and my mind the opportunity to ponder the wonder of it all and let hopeful thoughts enter in and push aside some of the darker ones.

 I hope you give yourself the gift of a peaceful summer night – and that you are able to eventually search for and then – in your own time – find comforting and love-filled memories in the experience.

--Cathy Seehutter

The child who owns this summer is not here,

not here to know the wealthy summer wind,

not here to share the glowing and the song.

The child who owns this summer did not live,

not live to touch the richness of this day,

this day in summer, when you are alone.

Cry to the summerwind

Cry, and behold the child

You remember. *--Sascha*

Let warm memories

Be as close to you

As the warmth of summer

###### The Promise

Your birth brought me starshine,

the moon and the sun;

my wishes, dreams gathered

‘round my little one.

My life became sacred,

full of promise and light,

all wrapped in the girl-child

bringing love at first sight.

The years of your living,

filled with laughter and tears

excitement, adventure,

some boredom, some fears,

but ended too quickly,

ahead of its time.

The loss so horrendous

such heartbreak was mine.

But from the beginning,

one thought rose so clear;

never would your death erase

the years you were here.

I would not be defeated

or diminished by your death;

I would hang on, learn to conquer,

if it took my every breath.

For if your death destroyed my life,

made both our lives a waste,

it would deny your life’s meaning\

and all the love you gave.

I vowed that years of sadness

would change, with work and grace,

to years of happiness, even joy,

in which you’d have a place.

Memories of you, like shining stars

in the patterns of my soul,

are beacons flashing light and love,

and with them I am whole.

In your honor, I live my life,\

now living it for two.

Through all my life, you too will live,

You lived…you live…you do.

*--Genesse Boudrea Gentry,*

*Stars in the Deepest Night: After the Death of a Child*

**The Gift of Someone Who Listens**

Those of us who have traveled a while

 Along this path called grief

Need to stop and remember that mile—

 The first mile of no relief.

It wasn’t the person with answers

 Who told us of ways to deal

It wasn’t the one who talked and talked

 That helped us start to heal.

Think of the friends who quietly sat

 And held our hands in theirs.

The ones who let us talk and talk

 And hugged away our tears.

We need to always remember

 That more than the words we speak,

It’s the gift of someone who listens\

 That most of us desperately seek.

*--Nancy Myerholts,*

*Waterville/Toledo TCF*

Accept me as I am

 grieving, pained.

 empty, lonely

Just love me

 and allow me to feel

 what I must feel.

One day I will begin to heal--

 I know not when.

 Don’t be afraid of me—

 It is still me.

Struggling to find

 myself—outside

 of this pain. Please

 just be my friend.

*--Marilyn Henderson,*

*TCF Pacific Northwest*

**In My Pocket**

I have memories in my pocket.

 They rattle just like change.

My memories of you are treasures

 I carry wherever I go.

They are stored in bits and pieces,

 parts of a beautiful whole.

They give me comfort

 when I think I am alone.

Yes, I have memories in my pocket,

 like so much other stuff I keep there.

But of all the treasure I have,

 it’s the memories of you

 that are the most precious.

*--Martin Baer, TCF North Shore-Boston*

**The Miracle of You**

Who could have known the exquisite difference

Your brief life would make upon mine?

Who could have known a tiny baby would

 Show me the beauty of a sunrise,

Or the wonder of a rainbow,

 or the pain of a tear?

Who would have known that an innocent little child

Would take away my fear of death

 and point me in the direction of Heaven?

Who could have known that you

 would succeed where so many others

 have failed?

*--Dana Gensler, TCF, South Center KY*

**I Still Love**

She brought me red roses tonight, the ones she knew I loved. I thanked her silently and watched as she sat against the nearest tree. She looked past me up toward the twilight sky. Her mouth was slightly smiling. Yet she had tears in her eyes. Her one hand tucked her auburn hair behind her ear and her other hand was twirling the grass between her fingers. She shivered a little and I wished I had my jacket to give her, a hand to comfort her. I wanted to tell her I loved her again, but it was as futile as trying to make roses grow in the dark. I wanted to kiss away the tears that were now streaming down her upturned face. I wanted things like before, when the world could make her laugh. She held one more rose, the most beautiful one, the one that had bloomed in her hand. She walked through the vacant space between her and me. I smiled in wonder as she tried to wipe away her tears. With a shaking hand she let down the final rose upon my grave and made her way toward the setting sun.

*--Alysa Mayer in memory of Keith*

**Now**

Your presence now fills me

with that which I never had before,

a knowing that love is what remains

when all else is gone;

a sureness that death is not an end

but a beginning in another time

and place, yet still connected

by what holds you to me.

Like sparks afire we go on,

both of us filling our pinpoints of light,

our souls, with what we need

to be bigger than we are

next time we fly away,

together, to NOW.

*--Sandy Goodman,*

*Living with Loss*

**Memories**

Tonight, I saw your silhouette

Against a harvest moon.

Tonight, I heard a sweet refrain

of some long-remembered tune.

Could it be you know, somehow,

how many hearts remember you?

In harvest moons and heartfelt tunes

the memories are true.

Where do they go

when the moon fades away

and the music can no longer be?

Far, far away to a wandering star

that only the heart can see.

*--Kelly Marston, TCF,*

 *Grand Junction, CO*

**Why Butterflies?**

Since the early centuries of the Christian church, the butterfly has symbolized life after death. The caterpillar signifies life here on earth; the cocoon—death, and the butterfly—emergence of the dead into a new beautiful, more free existence. Frequently the butterfly is seen with the word “Nika,” which means victory. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross tells of seeing butterflies drawn all over the walls of the children’s dormitories in the World War II concentration camps.… She concludes that these children knew their fate and were leaving a message.

The Compassionate Friends has adopted the butterfly as one of its symbols—a symbol of new life, of hope to us that our children are living in another dimension.

Before a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, though, it must spend time in a cocoon. We might be tempted to help release the butterfly from her cocoon. It is human nature to want to assist, but if we do, she will fall to the ground and die. Through her struggle to free herself, she strengthens her wings enough to survive and fly.

Grief is certainly like this process. We feel ugly, we change, we hide, we sometimes spin a cocoon around ourselves. It takes a long time. There is a difference, however; others may help us as we struggle. We need not do it all alone as the butterfly does, but the ultimate responsibility is ours. We have to grieve, hurt, cry, be angry, and struggle to free ourselves from the cocoon of grief. And one day, we do emerge—a stronger person, a more compassionate person—a beautiful butterfly.

**Falling Apart**

I seem to be falling apart. My attention span can be measured in seconds. I cry at the drop of a hat. I forget things constantly. The morning toast burns daily. I forget to sign the checks. Half of everything in the house is misplaced. Feelings of anxiety and restlessness are my constant companions. Rainy days seem extra dreary. Sunny days seem an outrage. Other people’s pain and frustration seem insignificant. Laughing, happy people seem out of place in my world. It has become routine to feel half crazy. I am told I am normal. I am a newly grieving person.

*-- By Eloise Cole*

**A Father's Grief**

I never believed I would see another season change with gladness.

I never believed I would see the world again without the haze of tears.

I never expected to actually laugh again.

I never felt my smile would return and feel natural on my face.

I never hoped my smile would return and feel natural on my face.

I never hoped for another day when I would not want to die.

I never envisioned a world that could again be bright and full of promise.

I believed that all that had passed from me the day he died and went away, never to return.

But I was wrong, and I know that in the fullness of your grieving, you, too, will come to understand that life goes on - that it can still have meaning - that even joy can touch your life once more.

*By Don Hackett
TCF, Hingham, MA*

**Riding the Beast**

In grieving the loss of our child, we ride a wild, screaming beast. Suddenly, out of nowhere, we are forced to mount and ride until the day we reach the end of our own lives. The beast is a frightening, ugly, apocalyptic horse - a raging, unrelenting atomic animal. We cannot get a grip, no matter how we try to cope, rationalize, or pray. We wonder where and how our lives came to be like this. What happened? How is it that we were going merrily along (more or less) in life and now, in one fell swoop, we are attached to this beast forever? No matter how much this monster bucks or how high it rears its black mane, we cannot fall off. Occasionally we feel that the animal might quiet, but at any moment it may also try to throw us with a vengeance as (if not more) forceful as before. We know that even as it tries, we cannot be dislodged. We are bound with straps that are as unbreakable as the love that bonds us to our child in the first place; a love forged before our child was conceived. We have no choice; the beast must be ridden just as the work of grief must be done. It is only when we are able to guide the beast to the final stable that we will be reunited with our child and our Creator. Until then, we must continue to ride.

*-- By John Harris 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.*

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.*

## 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 plea]sure, 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*

**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 h ave 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)*

**Upcoming EventS:**

 Mark your calendar for Eastern Jackson County’s Walk to Remember on September 21, 2019 at Waterfall Park in Independence, MO. More details to follow in future emails and the next newsletter.



# Love Gifts

***Thank you for the generous donation from Mark Fanning in memory of his son, Marcus.***

**Please help us help others. Make a LOVE GIFT today**. **Tax deductible Love Gifts may be sent to: TCF C/O Theresa Phillips 6200 Kentucky Ave, Raytown, MO 64133**

*For Remembrance dates please visit our website at* [*www.easternjacksoncountytcf.org*](http://www.easternjacksoncountytcf.org)

*Find us on Facebook at* [*https://www.facebook.com/groups/1582699755290182*](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.*