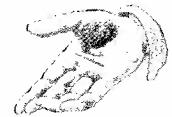




## *Helpers Along the Way*



You will have many helpers  
As you travel on this journey.

You may not even realize who they all are  
Until your journey is complete.

Be open to accept their help,  
For they've been through this  
With so many others before you.

These helpers, I believe,  
Are special people...

They know the right words to share  
And when to say them...

You will share with them  
Things never mentioned to anyone before.

They'll be there when you cry  
And also when you laugh.

They understand exactly the depth of what it is  
You're dealing with on this journey of yours.

Don't be afraid of what they may think,  
They've probably seen and heard it all before.

Just think of where we'd be if  
We had to travel on this journey alone.

By Kathy Ayling  
Rockford, Illinois



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# The Dance

Written by: - Tony Arata

Looking back on the memory of  
 The dance we shared 'neath the stars alone  
 For a moment all the world was right  
 How could I have known that you'd ever say goodbye

And now I'm glad I didn't know  
 The way it all would end the way it all would go  
 Our lives are better left to chance I could have missed the pain  
 But I'd of had to miss the dance

Holding you I held everything  
 For a moment wasn't I a king  
 But if I'd only known how the king would fall  
 Hey who's to say you know I might have chanced it all

And now I'm glad I didn't know  
 The way it all would end the way it all would go  
 Our lives are better left to chance I could have missed the pain  
 But I'd of had to miss the dance

Yes my life is better left to chance  
 I could have missed the pain but I'd of had to miss the dance

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ORIGINALLY ON



ALSO APPEARS ON



## **SHEILA**

**Sleet streaks toward concrete  
Yellowed autumn  
suddenly interrupted by snow  
Drifts build, tumble to the floor  
of my empty cavern  
echoing, "Gone, Gone"  
I am a shadow creeping forward  
Out from the shelter of buildings  
winter's wind cries,  
" Missing you "  
" Loved you "  
" NOT TRUE, NOT TRUE "  
But truth crashes in my ears  
Fallout of you  
drifts down  
settles in the air  
as ashes  
The way through, the way through  
is emptiness**

## Remember, I Love You

Do you,  
far away,  
beyond scudding clouds,  
blinding stars,  
black space,  
look down  
strain to see  
this tiny heap of dirt and rocks  
and spindly trees?  
Do you peer down,  
down  
to the tiny figures  
bumping into each other,  
stopping to shift their burdens  
from shoulder to shoulder.  
Can you hear, barely,  
the wonderings  
that we whisper back and forth?  
Do your eyes crinkle,  
knowing how caught we are  
way down here  
by our unknowing?  
Do tears well up,  
slide down your nose,  
become rain, sleet  
that we can't recognize  
as anything else?

Does Allan, at your side,  
jump up and down,  
yelling, yelling: "Hey dad, dad I'm here,  
I love you. Dad?"  
His father is caught in  
deafening air space.  
His grief weighs him down.

Did you carefully place  
each letter  
of your final message  
as you were already  
edging,  
edging  
past this earth barrier  
into the endless sky?

Can you hear our reply?  
Can you?  
"Remember, . . . remember  
we love you, too."


## WHAT IS COMPLICATED MOURNING?

Complicated mourning means that the survivor encounters significant and prolonged obstacles to expressing grief, as a result of one of more of the following factors:

- ❖ the circumstances of the death,
  - sudden or violent death (e.g. homicide, car crash, drowning)
  - death by suicide
  - multiple losses in a short span of time
  
- ❖ the relationship of the survivor to the person who has died,
  - father, mother
  - child
  - spouse
  - significant adult
  
- ❖ the psychological traits of the survivor prior to the death,
  - withdrawn, depressed, insecure, introverted
  - few interests/friendships separate from the lost loved one
  - highly dependant on the lost loved one
  
- ❖ the absence of effective, open, prolonged personal support for the survivor from family, friends, work/school environment, community, etc.

Contemporary society creates complications for appropriate mourning:

- ✓ fast-paced, here-and-now lifestyles
- ✓ transience, absence of extended family
- ✓ fewer community connections (neighbours, church)
- ✓ technology (fewer face-to-face connections)
- ✓ mass media has increased our fear of others
- ✓ discomfort with symbols or images of those who have died
- ✓ fewer and smaller funerals create an absence of the family's & community's recognition of death
- ✓



*A Sacred Place*

*I found again  
My sacred place;  
This moment now  
Is our shared grace.*

*My sacred space  
Is in your tears,  
Your trembling words,  
Your hidden fears.*


*I thought I'd lost  
That sacred space  
Where hearts and souls  
Leave our Earthen place.*

*But here in you  
Again I've found  
That sacred space  
From which we're ground.*

*So in your tears,  
And in your grief,  
And in your pain,  
This moment brief,*

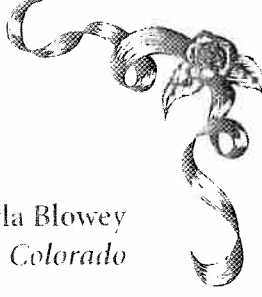
*I've found the sacred place for us,  
The awesome moment of relished grace,  
Where our souls meet  
In sacred space.*

*June 5, 2005  
By my wonderful friend,  
Sharon Highberger,  
Topeka, Kansas*



# However Long it Takes

By Carla Blowey  
Montrose, Colorado

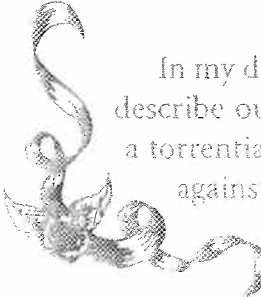


Recently, while dining out with friends, the discussion centered on what keeps bereaved parents “grieving” so long. Our friends have known us “post-Kevin,” meaning that they came into our lives a few years after our son’s passing. Talking about Kevin, our fourteen-year journey and my bereavement work are easy with these friends who are loving and supportive. The discussion started when our friend shared some observations about her new friend, a bereaved parent of five years who was struggling with an upcoming anniversary. My friend was saddened that after five years, her new friend was still replaying those last days of her child’s life as if it was yesterday, possessed with details and consumed with guilt over things out of her control. All she could do was listen and pray that her friend would let go and get on with her life. Exasperated she said to me, “When is she going to move on? She can’t change it!”

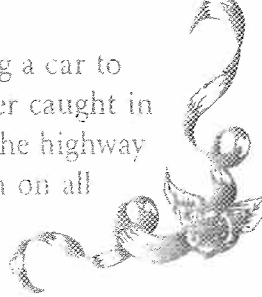
As the conversation continued, I flashed back to the beginning years when this type of comment would have shredded me. A hairdressing client of mine had said this very thing to me a few months after Kevin passed. “Carla, *it was just an accident*, the driver didn’t do it intentionally. You cannot change it. Can’t you see that and just accept it?” The tone in her voice made me shudder, but her assumption that I should *know* it made me feel small and stupid. How could I *know* anything except the obvious? On those occasions, I cried quietly in the backroom as my tears blended with the hair color I was mixing to apply to her hair.

Meanwhile, in the present, our friends were commending us on our “progress” and how far we have come. I truly appreciated that acknowledgment; but the truth is, that during difficult times seemingly unrelated to the loss, I *still* impose that expectation on myself to meet the perception of others that I am doing so well after fourteen years. As they continued, my thoughts returned to the thousands of bereaved parents who after several years are still feeling pressured to buck up and get on with their lives.

I identify with both groups, because I realize the non-bereaved point of view is coming from a place of unawareness. Sometimes I envy that position I once held. They really do want us to be well and they envision a future of peace and happiness for us. Their exasperation and impatience is a reaction to an underlying fear that we may *never* be happy again. Bottom line, the loss of a child is as inconceivable to them as it once was for us. No longer naïve, the bereaved parent’s point of view is a reality that our deepest fear has come true, and with it the belief of a loss of all control. If the non-bereaved could observe it from our perspective, they would be shocked and dismayed to see the road to our future littered with fragments from the past and emotional debris from unforeseen storms of grief.



In my dream workshops for bereaved parents, I use the metaphor of driving a car to describe our journey. The bereaved parent is like an inexperienced new driver caught in a torrential downpour of grief. Imagine trying to drive in the center lane of the highway against a blowing storm with a foggy, rain-spattered windshield, edged in on all four sides by semi-trucks forcing you to keep up with the high speed of traffic! Imagine further that you are without a map or



Some of us take small bites; some of us swallow it whole. Some of us chew slowly; some of us wolf it down. The point is that we have to give ourselves permission to proceed in our own time and stop keeping score. Everything we need to know to complete this journey is within us and we must trust ourselves to discover it...however long it takes. We will receive greater support from the non bereaved when we respect and honor our needs and model that without apology.

*"The soul always knows what to do to heal itself.  
The challenge is to silence the mind."  
Anonymous*

Ultimately, this newfound compassion for ourselves will make us more receptive to love which will activate healing, so we can reclaim our spirit. Eventually, more and more of those "grief cells" are fueled with love rather than fear. We will shine in the Light of Love...Imagine how whole and holy we will be! The beauty of this is that there is no beginning or end, or scheduled time -- only cycles of change and growth, dying and rebirth. In reconciling the death of our children, we can begin to integrate this new reality with a renewed sense of energy and confidence, and we can discover purpose and meaning again. *This is how we can nurture ourselves through grief; this is how we move on with our lives.* What would you do if you weren't afraid?

Carla Blowey is a bereaved mother and author of "*Dreaming Kevin: The Path to Healing.*" In her bereavement workshop, *Dreams: A Blessing in Disguise*, Carla invites all who are grieving to recognize their own dreams as a valuable tool for reconciling the death of their loved ones and healing the wounds of grief. She offers group participants an opportunity to see beyond the illusions of death and grief, bringing their dreams, their deceased loved ones, and ultimately themselves into the Light.



Carla  
will be presenting  
"*Dreams: A Blessing in  
Disguise for Grieving Parents*"  
this summer, July 1-3, at the  
Compassionate Friends  
2005 National Conference in  
Boston, MA.

July 14-17, she will be at the 2005  
Bereaved Parents of the USA National  
Gathering in Las Vegas.

[www.dreamingkevin.com](http://www.dreamingkevin.com)



"Only Time"

Who can say  
where the road goes  
where the day flows  
- only time  
And who can say  
if your love grows  
as your heart chose  
- only time

Who can say  
why your heart sighs  
as your love flies  
- only time  
And who can say  
why your heart cries  
when your love lies  
- only time

Who can say  
when the roads meet  
that love might be  
in your heart

And who can say  
when the day sleeps  
if the night keeps  
all your heart

Night keeps all your heart

Who can say  
if your love grows  
as your heart chose  
- only time  
And who can say  
where the road goes  
where the day flows  
- only time

Who knows - only time  
Who knows - only time

## **You're Still You**

**Through the darkness,  
I can see your light  
And you will always shine  
And I can feel your heart in mine  
Your face I've memorized  
I idolize just you  
I look up to  
everything you are  
In my eyes you do no wrong  
I've loved you for so long  
And after all is said and done  
You're still you  
After all, you're still you  
You walk past me  
I can feel your pain  
Time changes everything  
One truth always stays the same  
You're still you  
After all, you're still you  
I look up to  
Everything you are  
In my eyes you do no wrong  
And I believe in you  
Although you never asked me to  
I will remember you  
And what life put you through  
And in this cruel and lonely world  
I found one love  
You're still you  
After all, you're still you**

# **You Raise Me Up**

**When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary  
When troubles come and my heart burdened be  
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence,  
Until you come and sit awhile with me.  
You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains  
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas  
I am strong, when I am on your shoulders  
You raise me up... to more than I can be.  
You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains  
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas  
I am strong, when I am on your shoulders  
You raise me up... to more than I can be.**

**You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains  
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas  
And I am strong, when I am on your shoulders  
You raise me up... to more than I can be.  
You raise me up... to more than I can be.**

To Where You Are

Who can say for certain  
Maybe you're still here  
I feel you all around me  
Your memories so clear  
Deep in the stillness  
I can hear you speak  
Your still an inspiration  
Can it be  
That you are my  
Forever love

And you are watching over me from up above

Fly me up to where you are  
Beyond the distant star  
I wish upon tonight  
To see you smile  
If only for awhile  
To know you're there  
A breath away's not far  
To where you are...  
Are you gently sleeping  
Here inside my dream  
And isn't faith believing  
All power can't be seen  
As my heart holds you  
Just one beat away  
I cherish all you gave me  
Everyday  
Cause you are my  
Forever love

Watching me from up above  
And I believe

That angels breathe

And that love will live on and never leave

Fly me up to where you are  
Beyond the distant star  
I wish upon tonight  
To see you smile  
If only for awhile  
To know you're there  
A breath away's not far  
To where you are  
I know you're there  
A breath away's not far  
To where you are

## THE CARROT, THE EGG & THE COFFEE BEAN

A young woman went to her Mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as one problem was solved, a new one arose. Her Mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to boil. In the first she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil without saying a word.

In about twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me, what do you see?"

"Carrots, eggs and coffee" she replied. Her Mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. The Mother then asked the daughter to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard boiled egg. Finally, the Mother asked the daughter to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma. The daughter then asked, "What does it mean Mother?"

Her Mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity...boiling water. Each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water. "Which are you?" she asked the daughter.

"When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?" Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength? Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and hardened heart?

Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstances that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hour is the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate yourself to another level?

How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?

May you have enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep you human and enough hope to make you happy. The happiest of people do not necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything that comes along their way.

The brightest future will always be based on a forgotten past; you can not go forward in life until you let go of your past failures and heartaches.

When you were born, you were crying and everyone around you was smiling. Live your life so at the end, you are the one who is smiling and everyone around you is crying.