



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**

KAMLOOPS CHAPTER *Autumn 2014*

"The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope. It takes people out of the isolation society imposes on the bereaved and lets them express their grief naturally. With the shedding of tears, healing comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people who have survived and are learning to live and love again." - Simon Stephens Founder TCF

CHAPTER LEADER

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NEWSLETTER

**Arleen Simmonds Phone (250)374-2135
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MEETINGS

**1st Wednesday Every Month @ 7:00 PM
Kamloops United Church,
421 St. Paul St. Kamloops**

NEXT MEETINGS

**September 3, 2014
October 1, 2014
November 5, 2014**

TCF CANADA NATIONAL OFFICE

Email NationalOffice@TCFCanada.net

www.TCFCanada.net

Toll Free: 1-866-823-0141

Welcome

Especially to those newly bereaved who have joined us for the first time. The Compassionate Friends is a voluntary self help Organization offering support, understanding and hope for the future. All bereaved parents are welcome.

We are sorry we had to meet under such circumstances, but we are glad you found us. We would like to do all we can to help you through these times. We cannot hurry you through it or take away the pain, but we can help you understand more about what you are going through. Sometimes just knowing what you are feeling is normal can be helpful.

We are other parents who have experienced the death of a child and offer understanding and support through our monthly meetings a lending library, support material and a listening ear. We have learned the key to survival for bereaved families is communication.

We ask that you give us more than one meeting to decide if The Compassionate Friends is for you. It takes courage to attend your first meeting, but those who do come find an atmosphere of understanding from other parents and siblings who are having or have experienced the feelings of grief that you are now feeling.

**. "On such a day each road is planned
To lead to some enchanted land;
Each turning meets expectancy.
The signs I read on every hand.
I know by autumn's wizardry
On such a day the world can be
Only a great glad dream for me--
Only a great glad dream for me!"**

- Eleanor Myers Jewett. *An Autumn Day*



Kent Simmonds Photo ©

FYI.....

This coming December 2014 the Annual Candlelighting Service will be on the 1st Sunday in December. The date will be December 7, 2014 – 2:00 pm @ Kamloops United Church 421 St. Paul Street.

CLIMBING OUT OF THE VALLEY....Discovering Life After Loss...

A 6 week journey exploring the challenge and gifts of grief.

Wednesdays. 3:30-5:30, @ Kamloops United Church 421 St. Paul Street

September 24-October 29, 2014 - \$90* suggested donation

*financial support available for those on fixed income.

For registration and more information 250-372-3020-email kuchurch@shaw.ca
or, www.kamloopsunited.ca (you can also call Arleen @ 250-374-2135)

SEE PAGE 9 IN THIS NEWSLETTER

BC Bereavement Helpline Service(s): Helpline, referrals, information.

Contact: (604) 738-9950 Email: bcbh@telus.net

Website: www.bcbereavementhelpline.com

Suicide Support SurvivorAdvocates@yahoogroups.com

Sibling Websites www.tcfatlanta.org/sibling.html

Grief Works BC Service(s): Provides comprehensive support for the bereaved.

Contact: Kay Johnson at (604) 875-2741 Email: kjohnsoncw.bc.ca

Alive Alone Support for parents who have no surviving children. <http://www.alivealone.org>

Grief Watch: www.griefwatch.com

Canadian Parents Of Murdered Children <http://www.cpomc.ca/>

Center For Loss In Multiple Birth (CLIMB) Inc. www.climb-support.org

Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support www.nationalshare.org

This newsletter is also available in an electronic version. With the increase in postal rates we are asking if you would give consideration to receiving the newsletter via email. We will always make newsletters available by post for those without computers. Please email us at waskamloops@shaw.ca if you are able to change to the electronic version. Thank you to those who have made the change.

CONTRIBUTIONS: THE UNITED WAY Contributions to The Compassionate Friends/Kamloops may be made through the United Way. This can be done directly or through payroll deduction. The Compassionate Friends Kamloops Chapter must be specified as the designated recipient. The United Way will issue receipts to individuals for these donations. We are given a total only, no names of donors, and so we thank everyone who donates in this way. Other means of donations can be made directly to The Compassionate Friends of Kamloops or through other employee charity campaigns. We thank all those who support us with their donations, helping to carry out the important outreach done in the memory of our children. *We Are A Registered Charitable Non Profit Organization. Receipts Will Be Issued For Income Tax copyright 2014*



Lamps For The Journey...

There is no value in life except what you choose to place upon it and no happiness in any place except what you bring to it yourself. ~Henry David Thoreau~

“Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It's a relationship between equals. Only when we know our own darkness well can we be present with the darkness of others. Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity.”

~ Pema Chödrön, *The Places That Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times*

A song will outlive all sermons in the memory. ~ Henry Giles

I don't think of the misery, but of the beauty that still remains. ~ Anne Frank

“One of the most beautiful gifts in the world is the gift of encouragement. When someone encourages you, that person helps you over a threshold you might otherwise never have crossed on your own.”

~John O'Donohue, *Eternal Echoes: Celtic Reflections on Our Yearning to Belong*

What is to give light must endure the burning. ~ Viktor Frankl

Pain may well remind us that we are alive, but love reminds us why we are alive. ~ Trystan Wain Hughes

The thing to do, it seems to me, is to prepare yourself so you can be a rainbow in somebody else's cloud. Somebody who may not look like you. May not call God the same name you call God - if they call God at all. I may not dance your dances or speak your language. But be a blessing to somebody. That's what I think.

~Maya Angelou

A person isn't who they are during the last conversation you had with them, they're who they've been throughout your whole relationship. ~ Rainer Maria Rilke

If you're embarrassed because you have some notion about how men are supposed to behave, and it doesn't include weeping, then you have some personal work to do. ~Ray Bradbury

Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow. ~Melody Beattie

“Remember then that there is only one important time, and that time is now. The most important one is always the one you are with. And the most important thing is to do good for the one who is standing at your side. This is why we are here.” ~ Jon J. Muth, from *The Three Questions*

The way you get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning

~Mitch Albom

There's something about October.... Bittersweet is in the air, It's not the scent of exotic spice, Just a feeling that strips me bare. ~ Arleen Simmonds

“ Depression and Suicide” by Alison Flanagan

I often struggle to think about what I am going to write each quarter and this one is no different. But I have decided that this month I am going to concentrate on those individuals who for whatever reason leave this world by their own hand.

As you all know through my writing that both my boys died by suicide and it has been a long journey through the dark days and the pain. However, I have come out the other end with a greater understanding of what it must have been like for them to have gotten to that place in time and how the choice they made ended their lives.

TCF has had many calls recently from very distressed parents who have had a child die this way, so this is why I want to speak to you all this quarter about suicide as it is relevant. In the initial stages for many it is difficult to discuss this as they see it as a stigma and are afraid their child will be looked upon in a detrimental way. Suicide is not a palatable word is it? But it is what it is and although many think it is not what anyone should do, it does happen and it happened to many TCF families. Having a mental illness is not for the faint hearted and must be a very difficult illness to deal with. Depression and suicide work hand in hand but depression can be helped. So as parents dealing with the death of a loved one due to this, it is scary and undeniably difficult to come to terms with. However, please do not mistake depression as a bad thing as it is real just as real as someone having cancer, heart disease, diabetes or a broken leg, but depression and harmful thoughts cannot be seen and if you cannot touch it, see it or recognize it, how can it be treated? Many in society still look down on mental health. Yes I would rather my children were with me but they are not and what I am trying to convey is that suicide (although very traumatic for those dealing with its affects) is a plea for help and a way of releasing the persons pain. Without more information those suffering believe it is the only way to be rid of this emotional pain.

My memories of losing my first child in those initial weeks, months and even years are imprinted on my mind never to be forgotten, as the pain stayed with me for such a long time. I found that I could not sit still and wanted desperately to find out why, so I bought book after book looking for answers not only to why this had happened but where was the spirit of that beautiful soul? It surely had not gone completely. I found solace in the literature and it took me on a path of self discovery which changed my life. I am blessed that I found The Compassionate Friends as it helped me to heal from the very deep emotional pain and has supported me to find a place where I am at peace with the death of both my children. I realized that I could not change what had happened even though I had done so much to help both my boys when they were alive. Hopefully from what I had learned and gone through I could be of some help to my fellow bereaved and so it all began, and here I am many years later working as a volunteer in the organisation. I will be eternally grateful for the support I was given and I hope I have been able to support those who came after me in some way.

Grief is a very personal journey and so unique in so many ways but in other ways the same. This may sound contradictory, but when as bereaved parents we gather together at our peer support group meetings, we hear and understand many things that others discuss and this brings us a sense of belonging. For many they do not need that belonging but for others the sense of sharing is important and strong, and this is when your healing begins. Through sharing with others no matter the cause of your child's death, it supports you in the knowledge that you are understood and although the rest of the community thinks that there is a time limit on your healing you are accepted by your fellow bereaved and encouraged to speak your child's name whenever you need to. This creates a safe place to be, with a feeling of complete understanding. All the people I have shared with in TCF are still part of my life even although I do not see many of them anymore. They are there with a warm hug, a word of hope, a way to manage my grief or have sat with me and listened. Those people never leave you as they are the ones who helped you on your journey and those are the ones who encouraged and nurtured you. When I am down, and let me assure you I do get down sometimes, I remember something one of those people said to me and it brings me joy as I realize I did hear them and they are still by my side.

I would encourage those of you who have been afraid to take that initial step towards TCF to put your foot forward, it will be a challenge and no doubt difficult but it will have results which will stand you in good stead and help with the healing process. You may be with TCF for a short time or a long time but you will find friendship and support which will be with you forever.

Please be kind to yourselves, give yourself a pat on the back for the courage you all have, understand that others have no idea what any of you are going through, and always remember the love you all have for your precious child will keep you strong.
Love and Blessings

Alison (Mother of Roddy and Aidan) Lovingly lifted from Reflections the newsletter of TCF Western Australia

MEMORIALS

By Pat Schwiebert, R.N.pat@tearsoup.com

I will never forget you. And I don't want others to forget you either.

After the death of a valued companion we seem to have a deep need to preserve their memory. We write about them; we collect objects that hold meaning about them; we gather people together to tell stories about them; we make their favorite food; we create jewelry that contains their remains; or we write their name in the sand.

Makeshift monuments pop up where a tragedy has occurred—a cross perhaps with flowers at the side of the road. The German word for monument is “*denkmal*,” which means “thought object”. There is a loud shout that goes along with these monuments. “Think about it! Look what just happened. Every time you drive by here, remember and learn from this.” It seems to be the responsibility of those who loved and lost to hold the torch so others can see what is no longer here.

We name buildings, build lasting monuments, place plaques on objects, establish ongoing memorial gifts, as a way to honor, to appreciate, to educate about, or to continue the work of the one who died. Memorials can be grand, expensive and conspicuous, or they can be simple and draw little attention. They can be public or private. The individual meaning is what makes an object a memorial.

Memorials are also created as a way of coping with overwhelming grief. The word memorial literally means to remember. A parents whose child has died may find great comfort in getting a tattoo of their baby’s footprint or tattooing their baby’s name where others can see it and inquire about it, thus assuring that their child will always be remembered, and that the child will always be with them. Our infant loss group will soon unveil a memorial path that contains bricks with their baby’s names inscribed for all to see. Our Parents of Murdered Children group created a beautiful garden with a wall containing names of their loved ones who died a violent death.

I still have my mother’s coffee cup filled with powdered cream and sugar beside her memorial folder in our dining room. I look up and smile and greet her every morning. Her whistle still hangs on the dresser knob in my bedroom. She hoped at least *I* would not forget her and I haven’t .

Memorials help us to look back and move forward. We can safely continue on because we remember.

What we remember lives on.



Grief is a ceremony of lost
treasure,
Grief is the homage,
You pay to the love
you were once blessed to
share.

Grief is not the enemy.

~Sascha

Grief and Everyday Life

By Rose Carlson

Sharing Magazine – SHARE PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS

Those who have never experienced the death of a baby frequently assume that the immediate aftermath is the “hardest” part and that all will quickly return to normal as parents ease back into their daily lives. However, for many bereaved parents, nothing is further from the truth, and it is often the mundane daily life events that provide the most challenges once the initial shock has worn away. It can be difficult to find ways to be helpful as the day-to-day times that moms and dads have a hard time getting through are varied and can depend on the particular circumstances, background and support systems of each family. What may be difficult for one may not be difficult at all for another. Some parents might find hope and comfort in situations that others find stressful or even hurtful. Know that your feelings are valid, whether or not others in your life think they are.

As I began gathering thoughts and ideas for this article, I decided I wanted to talk with parents whose losses were not recent because I thought they would be the perfect ones to give some insight, perspective and hope to newly grieving parents. Reflections shared by these parents are only meant to reassure newly bereaved moms and dads that the emotions they may be feeling and the situations they may be struggling to cope with are completely normal. If you feel differently, please know that is okay. Your feelings may be constantly changing, and something that doesn't resonate with you in this moment may at a later time. Common topics mentioned by the parents I spoke with:

Support received in the early days after the loss often tapered off. Each parent found this very hurtful and painful, and dealt with the sense of abandonment they felt in different ways. One mom eventually forgave and gave a second chance to a friend who didn't contact her for over a year after the death of her son, realizing that the friendship was too important to let go. She is now glad she did because that friend has since become one of her greatest supporters.

The inability to function in the way they used to. Most of the parents said they had a hard time even getting out of bed to shower, cook, do housework, go to work, or take care of their other children; even going to the grocery store turned into a torturous chore. This caused each of them angst because it was so contrary to how they normally were, and they each had great difficulties coming to grasp with the new person they became.

Again, parents dealt with life in the early days in a multitude of ways. Some gave themselves permission to let things go. Many of them shared that getting through normal daily tasks was the most troublesome thing they faced in the early days.

What helped them were things such as talking with a attending support group meetings, finding online groups and even throwing themselves into an intensive project. Still others eventually came to a realization that they must go on because that is what their baby would want them to do. Still others said that the only way they were able to get through those rough early days, weeks and months was by leaning on their partner and keeping the lines of communication open. One dad said his one piece of advice would be, “Do not give up, do NOT give up. Keep talking, even if it is the last thing you want to do.”

Dealing with pregnant moms, baby showers, and the birth of new babies Repeatedly, moms expressed that these things made their loss seem even more isolating and devastating. Receiving invitations to baby showers can bring on a myriad of emotions. Some moms cannot attend showers or welcome new babies, while others love to snuggle the new babies that come into their lives. Some moms shared with me that they would become quite angry when shower invitations arrived in the mail, but one mom was upset when they didn't because she felt as if she had become an outcast. One mom told me that looking back, she wishes she had the courage and strength to be honest with everyone and tell them that while she was happy for them, it was too hard for her to see and hold new babies. She felt as if her honesty would have saved her and everyone else a great deal of hurt and misunderstood feelings.

If you glean nothing else from the experiences shared here, it is my hope that you have learned that there is no right or wrong way to feel and that it is important to take good care of your own heart and needs. To read more ideas on how to deal with day-to-day life while grieving, visit our blog: <http://www.nationalshare.blogspot.com/>

Blessings and Birthdays

Fifty years ago on October 30, 1964 we welcomed into our family our son Kenneth Bruce Simmonds, he joined older brother Keith and sister Kelly. One short year and two weeks later. Kenneth welcomed his baby brother Kent. Kenneth was drowned on August 11, 1988 at the age of 23 years while fishing at Wallachin on the banks of the Thompson River..

We were blessed with 23 years and 10 months of birthdays, Christmases, Easters, Thanksgivings, new baby nephews and close loving family relationships. We have missed him, time without end, for over 26 years now; missed his joy in more new nephews and precious family times; missed seeing him discover all the wonderful potential he was capable of. Missed his gentle smile, subtle humour, hugs and love.

In the early days of grieving our son I took a lot of comfort in music, so many songs seemed to express what I was feeling, too many to name but two written and performed by John Denver are still special to me.

Some Days Are Diamonds

John Denver

When You asked how I've been here without you
I'd like to say I've been fine and I do.
But we both know the truth is hard to come by
And if I told the truth, that's not quite true

Some days are diamonds some days are stones
Sometimes the hard times won't leave me alone
Sometimes a cold wind blows a chill in my bones
Some days are diamonds some days are stones.

Now the face that I see in my mirror
More and more is a stranger to me
More and more I can see there's a danger
In becoming what I never thought I'd be

Some days are diamonds some days are stones
Sometimes the hard times won't leave me alone
Sometimes a cold wind blows a chill in my bones
Some days are diamonds some days are stones.

Some days are diamonds some days are stones
Sometimes the hard times won't leave me alone
Sometimes a cold wind blows a chill in my bones
Some days are diamonds some days are stones.

<http://youtu.be/vJzcpUKKxzM>

In memory of Kenneth and in thanksgiving for the blessings he brought us and in thanksgiving for all our children and grandchildren and the blessings they are to us every day.

~Arleen Simmonds TCF/Kamloops, B.C.



Perhaps Love

John Denver

Perhaps love is like a resting place
A shelter from the storm
It exists to give you comfort
It is there to keep you warm
And in those times of trouble
When you are most alone
The memory of love will bring you home

Perhaps love is like a window
Perhaps an open door
It invites you to come closer
It wants to show you more
And even if you lose yourself
And don't know what to do
The memory of love will see you through

Oh, love to some is like a cloud
To some as strong as steel
For some a way of living
For some a way to feel
And some say love is holding on
And some say letting go
And some say love is everything
And some say they don't know

Perhaps love is like the ocean
Full of conflict, full of pain
Like a fire when it's cold outside
Or thunder when it rains
If I should live forever
And all my dreams come true
My memories of love will be of you

<http://youtu.be/3YnfCH7LNcM>

THANKSGIVING

The time draws near
And the calendar says
Thanksgiving is really here.

Time to reflect and time to gather
Thoughts of what to be thankful of.

Thankful? I think not.
My life is not full these days
And to be thankful is beyond my grasp.

But to give thanks? This, I believe, can be done.
Searching my soul deep within
Reasons to give thanks surface to the edge

Yes, I give thanks
For the memories of yesterdays,
The love, the laughter, the joy of each day when James was with us
The trials & tribulations of being an active parent,
The rewards & the challenges of raising a child,
The days of blissful ignorance when I thought tragedy would never visit our home,
The days when life was normal, even though I took it all for granted.
For the treasures of today's,
The sunrise, sunset, the changing of the seasons,
The new found friends along this journey I reluctantly travel
The tried & true friends who stand by me still,
The strong and everlasting love of my husband
The warmth of wet kisses from my canine companion & feline friend,
The encouragement & support, compassion & caring I give & receive as
I survive and help others survive.
For the hopes and possibilities of a peaceful tomorrow,
With faith, love, & perseverance as I struggle to move on
With James in my heart forevermore, spiritually guiding me with his new presence,
With sorrow and reluctance, each new day,
To yet, somehow, be open and loving,
Not to forsake what I've learned Because of what I've lost.

You see, it's not about keeping up with the Jones' having an SUV or two in the garage, having the largest beanie baby collection having so many CD's, video games, or the newest, most improved, latest and greatest new gadgets, not even being up to date with state of the art technology -

It's about love - it's about the gifts of yesterday, blended with the blessings of today to make meaning for tomorrow.

Meg Avery (James' mom) TCF Lawrenceville, Ga



CLIMBING OUT OF THE VALLEY...

DISCOVERING LIFE AFTER LOSS

A six week journey exploring the challenges and gifts of grief.

WEDNESDAYS, 3:30-5:30 @ KAMLOOPS UNITED CHURCH 421 St. Paul Street
September 24 – October 29, 2014 \$90* suggested donation
**financial support available for those on fixed income.*

Hosted by Kamloops United Church, and facilitated by Mary Widmer (C&C Resources for Life), and Bruce Comrie (KUC), this holistic (mind, body, spirit) healing opportunity is open to anyone working through loss in their life.

Through whole group and small group engagement, Personal reflection, and other related resources, we will explore; Care For Self, The Stages & Emotions of Grief
How To Negotiate Special Days,....and much more

REGISTER through KUC: 25-372-3020 by email: kuchurch@shaw.ca

Or, www.kamloopsunited.ca by SEPTEMBER 17, 2014

You can also contact Arleen @ TCF @ 250-374-2135 or waskamloops@shaw.ca

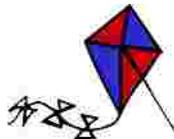
WORLD SUICIDE AWARENESS & PREVENTION DAY

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2014 FROM 11:00am – 1:00pm @ RIVERSIDE PARK

Please Join Us For This 2nd Annual Event In Kamloops
And Help Us Bring Suicide Out Of The Shadows

All Ages kite making, kite flying memorials, drumming, community awareness booths, and so much more.

Join us for FREE CAKE at NOON



September Memories

Many of our members have lost children of school age. Even for those whose children died before they could go to school or after they were finished with school, September often brings painful memories. Seeing children with brand new clothes and the latest craze in lunch boxes and book bags, lined up for the bus, brings back memories for all of us.

For some, we see children our child's age, progress to the next grade when he or she will never have that experience. For some, we remember putting our child on that bus, the last minute rush to replace outgrown clothes and buy school supplies. For some, the pain is from the dreams we had of seeing our child go to school, dreams that our child never lived long enough to bring to fruition. Some of us have younger children who are now "passing" the age of our dead child, who should have been the older brother or sister.

In my case I have one daughter left, and I remember shopping for back-to-school clothes for two. I can't help but wonder what size Colleen would be wearing now. She'd be 12. Colleen rode in one of those little buses because she was handicapped. My mom used to hold her at the front door of her house, swaying back and forth, saying, "Tick tock, here comes the bus." I often think of that when I see one of those little buses. Even after five years, I still look for #77, her bus

I guess I'm trying to say two things. First, we're all in this together; we experience different variations of the same pain. Second, we all have to expect that moments of nostalgia and longing will be with us. ALWAYS. The pain does dull some what with the years, but tears will always spring to our eyes at certain moments. The special days will always tug at our heartstrings in a way that non-bereaved parents will never fully understand. At least we have each other, people who know what we're feeling and do understand our pain. I'm glad we can be here for each other. --Kathy Hahn, *TCF/Lower Bucks .org*.



Halloween Is Still a Holiday to Remember By: Wayne Loder ~ TCF Lakes Area, Michigan

Two Halloweens have now passed since my eighteen year-old Stephanie and five-year-old Stephen left us to live with God. Even before the kids were old enough to trick or-treat, I still recall their delight at the costumes worn by all the neighborhood kids who came to the door.

I still remember how thrilled Stephen was to be handing out the candy when he was only one-and-a-half years old. We still have a picture of him holding the plate of goodies. If you look close, you can see where he took a bite out of one of the candy bars with the wrapper on and set it back on the plate.

I can still remember the all too few times I was able to take my children out trick-or-treating. I remember my daughter dressed up as a nurse offering to fix up all those other trick-or-treaters who were obviously hurting with all that fake blood they were wearing.

I remember Stephen wearing his great pumpkin outfit. We stuffed it so full of padding that when he fell down not only did he not get hurt, he had to be physically picked up because he was flailing his arms around like a beetle on its back.

I can still see Stef holding Stephen's little hand and patiently leading him up the walkway and helping him hold open his bag so that the candy would find its mark. She always made certain he said thank you for the candy. It usually came out "thank woo."

The first Halloween following their death I remember driving home with tears streaming down my face as I watched the other trick-or-treaters coming up and down the streets. My wife and I fled our home depositing bags of candy for our next door neighbors to hand out for us. Last year we found the courage to stick around and greet the ghosts and goblins who found their way to our door. Funny thing was we felt as dressed up as the trick-or-treaters. We were wearing our happy face masks.

The memories are now starting to fade of the Halloween before our children died. It won't be too long and I'll be leading Christopher our son who is now a year old up those driveways just like I did before. I feel sad that Stef and Steve can't be there but you know I have a feeling that if I hold out my hand and close my eyes, two little gloved hands will slip into mine and I'll again hear in unison "just one more house Daddy."

Remembrance Day November 11, 2014

Commemorating the Centenary of WW1

In Memoriam

by Ewart Alan Mackintosh

(killed in action 21st November 1917 aged 24)

So you were David's father,
And he was your only son,
And the new-cut peats are rotting
And the work is left undone,
Because of an old man weeping,
Just an old man in pain,
For David, his son David,
That will not come again.

Oh, the letters he wrote you,
And I can see them still,
Not a word of the fighting,
But just the sheep on the hill
And how you should get the crops in
Ere the year get stormier,
And the Bosches have got his body,
And I was his officer.

You were only David's father,
But I had fifty sons
When we went up in the evening
Under the arch of the guns,
And we came back at twilight -
O God! I heard them call
To me for help and pity
That could not help at all.

Oh, never will I forget you,
My men that trusted me,
More my sons than your fathers',
For they could only see
The little helpless babies
And the young men in their pride.
They could not see you dying,
And hold you while you died.

Happy and young and gallant,
They saw their first-born go,
But not the strong limbs broken
And the beautiful men brought low,
The piteous writhing bodies,
They screamed "Don't leave me, sir",
For they were only your fathers
But I was your officer.

*Private David Sutherland has no known grave.
His name is commemorated in Bay 8 of the
Arras Memorial to the Missing at
Faubourg d'Amiens military cemetery in Arras.*



The Autumn

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Go, sit upon the lofty hill,
And turn your eyes around,
Where waving woods and waters wild
Do hymn an autumn sound.
The summer sun is faint on them —
The summer flowers depart —
Sit still — as all transform'd to stone,
Except your musing heart.

How there you sat in summer-time,
May yet be in your mind;
And how you heard the green woods sing
Beneath the freshening wind.
Though the same wind now blows around,
You would its blast recall;
For every breath that stirs the trees,
Doth cause a leaf to fall.

Oh! like that wind, is all the mirth
That flesh and dust impart:
We cannot bear its visitings,
When change is on the heart.
Gay words and jests may make us smile,
When Sorrow is asleep;
But other things must make us smile,
When Sorrow bids us weep!

The dearest hands that clasp our hands, —
Their presence may be o'er;
The dearest voice that meets our ear,
That tone may come no more!
Youth fades; and then, the joys of youth,
Which once refresh'd our mind,
Shall come — as, on those sighing woods,
The chilling autumn wind.

Hear not the wind — view not the woods;
Look out o'er vale and hill —
In spring, the sky encircled them —
The sky is round them still.
Come autumn's scathe — come winter's cold —
Come change — and human fate!
Whatever prospect Heaven doth bound,
Can ne'er be desolate.



To My Brother, My Friend

Tomorrow is your day,
And I'm thinking it's time to head to Blind Bay
For that is where you wanted to be.
At least that is what you always told me,
So now it is time to let you rest...
An angel was needed and you fit the description best....
I'm proud of you for everything, I really want to say.
You were the silly, the fun, the loving one, and always made everything okay..

My rock once upon a time,
Before you brought me my partner in crime.
An uncle you were at a young age to my first son.
Good times you gave him always so much fun.
My younger children heard your voice today,
An old collection of silly phone messages I was able to play.
They asked me if someone saved you from your drowning.
I was able to laugh at their cuteness and smile without frowning.
They truly are connected to you in so many ways,
Which really helps bring peace to ease me thru the sometimes painful days.
I know that you are not far and always near..
As you must sit beside me from time to time and catch the odd tear.
There's so much I want to say....
If Heaven would let me visit for a day,
I love you and I thank you for everything you have brought to my life.
I truly believe God had a mission for you and that was to help Mike find a wife!
Ok now that everyone is laughing now,
I must gracefully take a bow.
Please continue to watch over us From the greatest place of all.
We'll reunite at the Golden Gate when we each get our call.
You will be waiting there with a big ole' smile.
And you'll surely say, "Hey...It's been a while."
Rest In Peace My Dear Brother.
You are like no other.

Written by Valerie Pearson
In loving memory of her brother Owen Hanna