



Hope and Fight in the Darkness

*A collection of stories, poetry and advice
For those Bereaved by Suicide*

Conclusion

We hope you have found this booklet helpful. The stories and poetry shared have allowed us insight into the emotions a death by suicide can leave, and also the hope that clients can have for their future. We are able to make connections with each person as they express their deepest emotions and allow for healing within us.

We would like to thank Evelyn Mc McCullough for her kind permission to use her photographs in our booklet. These photographs allow us to express some of the emotions through grief. Evelyn is going through her own journey of Cancer treatment and finds photography a way of expressing her journey and it allows her to raise funds for cancer charities across Northern Ireland. For more information on her book please contact her via evemccullough@yahoo.co.uk.

As each person grieves differently we at the bereavement by suicide service provide a unique service that supports each individual. We come together in a safe space to talk about our loved ones. This can be on a one to one or group basis. Through this journey of healing and acceptance we come to see the nature of their lives and not the nature of their deaths.

If you are struggling with your grief please contact David or Danielle on 028 9441 3544.

'No one ever really dies, as long as they took the time to leave us with fond memories.'

Introduction

This booklet 'Hope and Light in the Darkness' is a collection of stories, poetry and advice for families, friends and communities bereaved by suicide. It is a follow on booklet to our 'Mystic Poems and Healing' booklet. Both resources are inspired and created with love by families bereaved by suicide within the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

We would like to offer our sympathy to you, your family and friends who have been affected by your sad loss. We hope that this booklet will provide support to you and through the clients stories help you to find hope and light in your own darkness of grief and loss.

Each person grieves differently and these stories are shared by families to give you an insight into how their grief has impacted on their life and how they cope with their grief. We hope the personal guidelines will help you to find your lifeline during your grief.

I want to thank everyone who has contributed to this booklet and choose to share their grief in order to help each of you heal.

Danielle Gallagher, Support officer for Bereaved by Suicide

It has been a pleasure and an amazingly humble experience to see the generosity of spirit of the families and friends of the those who have lost their loves to suicide; in their openness to share their hearts and the experiences of hurt and healing with each other. Although it can not bring them back, the acceptance, understanding and comfort , they bring to each other helps the healing process . The stories and poems in this book are example of the frank and powerful expressions of shared emotions and I know it will help others to know they are not alone.

David Olphert, Family Liaison for Bereaved by Suicide

Contents

	Page no.
Introduction	3
Stories & Letters from the Heart	5
Poetry from the Heart	24
Personal Guidelines	40
Conclusion	55

Ways for others to help

It is always difficult to know what to say to support people who are grieving and this seems to be especially difficult when talking about suicide.

- Don't avoid making contact because you don't know what to say or because you are worried about upsetting them; they have already been through a terrible experience and avoiding them now only adds to their hurt.
- Remember that communicating isn't just about words – making eye contact, offering a handshake or a hug can convey far more support than well-rehearsed words.
- Once you open up the opportunity, you may find you do not need to do much talking – simply listening to the bereaved person and giving them the space to talk is exactly what is needed.

Allow the person to be in the moment and experience what they are going through – don't try to distract them away from thinking about the person who has died or focus on the future. Even though it is painful, they need to experience it.

Be reassuring and supportive – let their words be your guide. They have the right to feel the way that they do. Focus on the loss of the person rather than how they died. When the moments are right, share positive memories – this can be very comforting. Avoid the term “committed suicide” as this has the connotation of a criminal act – “took their life” or “died by suicide” are better phrases.

In addition to talking with and listening to the bereaved person, there are other ways that you can show your support. Ask what you can do to help. It may help to make specific offers – focus on what obviously needs to be done such as babysitting, making a meal, shopping, cleaning, making phone calls etc. Routine tasks may be neglected by those who are grieving. As time progresses there may be other activities you can support them with particularly if they may be having trouble thinking clearly in e.g. arranging the funeral, reviewing finances etc.

Remember that the grieving and recovery process is long and complex – don't stop with offers of support once the funeral is over. Even the odd phone call can go a long way to make people feel that they still matter. Support them in taking things at their own pace – there will be plenty of other people around them who may be urging them to “get back to normal”. Remember key dates such as anniversaries and holidays – get in contact and ask if they would like to do something or if they would like some company on these days.

Be aware of some of the support services that are available to them. Never force them or sign them up for something without their permission but if the time is right and you think it is appropriate you can make them aware of the possibilities. Be aware of prolonged symptoms of grief or depression and encourage them to seek help from their GP if you are concerned. Be aware of your own energy, emotions and health – supporting someone else can be tiring or challenging – particularly if you are grieving yourself. Ensure that you find appropriate support for yourself – we can only help others if we look after ourselves. [Source: www.uk-sobs.org.uk](http://www.uk-sobs.org.uk)

How to cope with Holidays, Birthdays and Anniversaries

Whatever else you do, try to think ahead, anticipate the hard parts, and make a plan. The following are examples, ways to honour and remember your loved one on the anniversary of their death:

- Go to the grave and take some flowers (or to any other place where you go to remember your loved one).
- Look at old photographs and videos. Do this alone and have a good cry or reminisce over photo albums with family and friends.
- Donate a few of your loved ones old belongings to a shelter or other charity. If you don't want to give away any of their things, just make a charitable donation in their name.
- Volunteer with a charity of cause close to your loved ones heart.
- Plan a memorial service or candle vigil.
- Reach out to someone else grieving the loss with a letter, card, phone call or email.
- Hold a dinner and invite those who knew your loved ones best.
- Cook your loved ones favourite dish or ask family/friends to bring a dish your loved one liked.
- Light a candle in honour of your loved one.
- Visit or spend time in a place where you feel close to your loved one.
- Take a trip you had been planning or dreaming about.
- Read old notes, letters or emails from your loved one.
- Treat yourself to a massage.
- Distract yourself by getting together with friends, going to the movies or taking a short trip.
- Watch your loved ones favourite film.
- Make a mix CD of music that reminds you of your loved one.
- Create a new event/ritual to celebrate the life of your loved one. Choose an event/ritual that can be repeated in the years to come.
- Do something your loved one would have enjoyed.
- Build a memorial with portraits, personal items and objects that remind you of your loved one.
- Spend time writing about your loved one.
- Plant a tree in your loved ones name.
- Establish an event in their name.
- Make a keepsake box of things that remind you of your loved one.
- Finish a project your loved one was working on.
- Continue to work towards a cause your loved one was involved in.
- Tell a story about your loved one to a stranger.
- Help other grievers.
- Celebrate the strengths you have developed as a result of your loved ones death.
- Search for joy and feel gratitude..."so glad you were born".

Stories & Letters from the Heart



A time for reflection of present & past

Friends

Friends can be a great source of support, for example with practical things immediately after the death when you might be finding it impossible to deal with day-to-day life and for talking about the person who died. Sometimes though, friends may find it hard to know what to do or say for fear of upsetting you.

You can make it easier for them by letting them know what they can do to help, when you need to talk and when you'd rather be alone. Some friends may be so eager to help that they insist on talking about your loss even when you don't want to. If this happens you might say something like: "I don't even want to listen to anybody else talking about it just now."

Remember, you don't need to take the advice offered by friends

– make your own decisions about what you want to do.

If you feel that your family and friends cannot provide all the support you need, there is other help available (see 'Sources of support').

The future

The time people take to mourn the loss of someone they have been close to is different for everybody. Some feelings, such as missing the person, may never go away completely, but the pain becomes less with time. An important part of rebuilding your life seems to be to accept that the death really has happened and the person is not coming back. Gradually the things that were good about the person when they were alive can start to be important, as well as their death.

Although life is never the same again, for most people there does come a time when they begin to enjoy living again. When things seem very bleak it is important to live from day to day but remember that things will change in the future and that help is available if needed.

Suicidal feelings

Some people who have been bereaved by suicide can have suicidal thoughts themselves. If you have thoughts like this, it's important to talk to someone about them. If there is nobody you can share your feelings with, you could contact the Lifeline helpline on 0808 808 8000.

Parents who have lost a child

The death of a child is devastating. If your child dies by suicide, the fact that they seemingly 'chose to die' makes this even worse, and can seem like a rejection of you as a parent. You may feel that you have failed because you couldn't help them and wonder if anything you said or did contributed to their state of mind. You might feel guilty for not noticing things which, looking back, you think may have been warning signs. You may discover things that they kept hidden from you and realise that you did not know them as well as you thought. You may blame yourself for not realising that they were so unhappy. You may also feel that others are judging you as a bad parent. No one can be a perfect parent – try to remember all the good things you did for your child.

If you have other children, they will need you even more at this time. Ask other family members or friends for help until you regain your confidence. You may worry that your other children may be in danger of suicide. You can help your children by encouraging them to talk about their feelings and to find other ways of dealing with problems. Try not to become overprotective or to put too much pressure on them. Value them for their own qualities and prevent them from feeling that they have to take the place of your dead child. If your only child has died, you may feel that all your hopes and plans for the future are now gone and that life is pointless. It is important to try to remember that your child will always be a part of you and that their memory will remain. If feelings of hopelessness persist, see your doctor.

If your adult child has died, you may feel unsupported compared with your child's spouse and children. You may feel an extra burden of responsibility to 'make things right' for your grandchildren but may not be able to do so. If you have any feelings of anger or blame towards your child's partner, try not to express them in front of your grandchildren.

Mothers and fathers often mourn in different ways. This can put a strain on relationships as it can be difficult to share feelings and to live with each other's pain. Some parents blame the other for the death and may question their reasons for staying together, but some may become closer through supporting each other and sharing their grief.

For separated or divorced parents there can be extra complications. The parent who did not live with the child may feel excluded from the family mourning or may be less supported or even blamed. Step-parents may also feel left out. It is helpful to let your partner know how you are feeling.

Learning to live with grief

by Stephen Johnston

As a facilitator for the Support Groups I have had the humbling and privileged experience of being a part of somebody's devastating personal grief. It is not an easy step to take.....coming to a support group for those bereaved by suicide. There are so many thoughts you have before coming – What's the point? How will talking help me? Nobody will understand. Will I have to stand up in front of others and tell my story? It will make me feel worse.



These are all the thoughts and questions that I had as a bereaved parent whenever my son, Christopher died by suicide on 15th June 2003 aged 13. At that time there was very little support and as parents we had to look for it. I discovered a support group of bereaved by suicide family members based in Omagh and thought long and hard about attending.....all those thoughts and questions turned over and over in my mind. But eventually I decided to attend, there was only so much family and friends could do but I felt they couldn't truly understand. And yes I was petrified on the first night I attended the group.

However I can honestly say that it was the first time that I felt that others could truly understand my pain and grief. I felt that I had made the right decision to attend. Perhaps it was one of the main things that helped me to begin to heal my loss of Christopher and slowly begin to learn to live a new life. I think it's important to say that this does not mean "getting over it" or forgetting but rather learning to live with my grief.

Our groups can help you begin to cope with your grief and perhaps learn to live a new life with this grief. By coming together and sharing our understanding of loss by suicide we may share tears, anger, frustrations, and hopelessness but you know what? We can also smile and laugh with each other and that's ok too!

The work that I do now as a counsellor and group facilitator has been as a direct result of Christopher's death and I feel very honoured to hopefully help others who have been scarred by suicide. I wouldn't change what I do now but I would love to be able to change how I got here. I was once asked at a Bereaved by Suicide workshop I was running if I had ever thought about how many people I may have helped because of Christopher? I found that comforting as I had never looked at it like that.

As such all that I do is founded in the deep love and loss that I have for my son, Christopher... I only wish he was still here.

Kid Brother

by Joe O’Kane

On 10th February 2012 my brother Eamonn, aged 50, died by suicide and our lives changed forever.

As they say in the movies, he was my “kid brother “. I was the eldest of 7 children at 16 years old and I suppose Eamonn was around 10 years of age at the time our mother died, so in a way, being the eldest, I felt responsible for my brothers and sisters as we grew up. We were always a very close family, perhaps because we had a bond of music instilled in us by our mother who coached us in our family group, as 5 of us performed all around the country up until her death.

The music took a back seat for many years until 2005 when we reformed again, for the “craic” and we had some great nights together. We always enjoyed it and I think our audiences did too.

Eamonn was by far the star of the group, a brilliant singer and talented musician and always laughing and having a bit of banter. In fact, the last night I actually spoke to Eamonn he was performing beside me, standing to the right of me as usual, singing and playing the guitar. It was Burn’s Night at the Golf Club. About 10 days later, it was a Friday night, my sister phoned me to tell me Eamonn was dead.

He had his demons, his problems and we all knew it. He took refuge in drink and that was his downfall. He was drinking on the day of his death and I often think did he really mean to take his own life or was it just a drunken escapade gone wrong. This is one of the many re-occurring thoughts I have.

None of us were particularly happy with the way Eamonn’s life had turned in his final years, but he seemed happy so we let it go and said nothing. Don’t rock the boat. Stay out of it. Let sleeping dogs lie. Maybe that was a mistake. Maybe big brother should have intervened. Give him a bit of a shake. Tell him to wise up. That’s another regret I have, I should have been there for him, but I did nothing. Maybe he would still be here with us if I had done something.

Guilt. Grief. Anger. Pity. I had all these emotions and more. Guilt for what I maybe could or should have done. Grief and sorrow that my brother who I loved dearly could feel so low as to do this; to end his life and not ask me, ask anyone for help.

Anger that he would do this to his family; not only his brothers, sisters and father but to his wife and children. Anger at the waste of it all and pity for all of us left behind. And I pity Eamonn in his lonely final moments.

Young people

As a young person, you are no different to anyone else in the range and intensity of experiences you are likely to feel when someone you know has died.

It could be the first time that someone you know has died, and the feelings you are experiencing can be frightening. You may worry about how you will cope and about what you are going to say to other people.

Try to accept your feelings rather than suppress them. Crying can help, but if you feel uncomfortable crying in front of others, try to find somewhere you can cry privately. If you feel angry, try talking to someone or doing something physical, like kicking a ball or punching a cushion.

You may find that some friends avoid you because they don’t know what to say. Let them know that you’d like to see them and that it’s OK to talk – or not to talk, if that’s what you prefer.

Barnardo’s Child Bereavement Service

Here in the Northern Board we support families bereaved by Suicide offering family support, individual therapeutic support for Children and Young People. Children and Young People are resilient with support, information and care they can begin to heal. We work with Children and Young People up to the age of 18. For more information please contact us on either 07796148549 or 028 90668333.



Guidance to Families

The family

Family relationships can suffer at this time. Family members, grieving in different ways, can find it hard to understand one another or to communicate with one another. Some relatives may not even want to mention the dead person's name. Conflicts may develop causing further heartbreak and pain. Sometimes the search for someone to blame results in one particular family member becoming a scapegoat, leaving that person especially isolated.

Try to be patient and understanding and talk to each other about how you feel. Everyone grieves in a different way, and if someone goes about it in a different way to you, it doesn't mean that they don't care. Try not to compare grief reactions.

The children

Children in the family may have particular difficulties. Often the family tries to protect the children by keeping them away from the funeral or not telling them what has happened. The children, however, can observe the severe distress all around and usually hear all the painful details from other sources e.g. at school. It may be useful to discuss your concerns with the school or other organisations which the children are involved with e.g. youth clubs etc.

They can feel trapped in silence as they are "not supposed to know" and they feel that they do not have permission to talk about what has happened, to share in the grieving events and to grieve too. Gossip may harm children if they have not been told the truth,

Children need to be prepared for the outside world after a traumatic death. Honest and open communication, shared in loving ways helps most. Younger children are often satisfied to know that their relation had an accident. Older children will need to know what has happened and to be allowed to talk about it and to ask questions. Barnardo's Child Bereavement Service can provide support for you to do this. They can provide someone who will listen to you and help identify the best way to support your child. They can give clear, age appropriate information both verbally and in written form. Barnardo's will also provide the opportunity for you and your children to meet with experienced workers. These workers are very skilled at listening and supporting children. Opportunities regarding individual work for children and young people looking at the impact that a suicide has had on them and their life can be discussed. Regular and appropriate feedback will be given to you as the parent or carer. Families will also have the opportunity if appropriate to attend a residential group for those bereaved by suicide.

These are the thoughts that I had for a long long time. Daily they tormented me. Daily I shed my secret tears. I couldn't listen to music; I could hear him singing the same songs that they were playing on the radio. Daily I thought of his wife and children and the rest of my family and worried how they would cope.

Families of suicide victims have a terrible cross to bear. It is a different type of loss, a different type of grief to deal with than with a natural death. All the emotions I mentioned above are in the mix day and daily and it is terribly hard to deal with. This is how I tried to cope with it :

- I went to counselling. My sister urged me to go and reluctantly I did. Eventually I began to get something out of it and realized that it wasn't my fault. I couldn't, we couldn't take the blame for Eamonn's actions. It took a long while for this particular penny to drop.
- I began to pray again. Something I hadn't done for many years. I asked God for help, help for us all to get through it.
- I began to look around me – to appreciate the beauty of nature around me, the beauty of the world around me and my family – all of which I had been taking for granted and not appreciating. A long walk in the countryside is a great tonic.
- I began to think of all the good times we had with Eamonn, all the laughs and all the craic. Eventually I could sing again and sing his songs. And smile.

I will never, ever get over Eamonn's suicide but gradually, over the years, I have learned to live with it, to accept it. I love my brother dearly and miss him terribly but I have learned to appreciate what I had with him and what I have today. My own family and friends and I have realized just how precious life is and how quickly and terribly that can all change.

I still shed the odd tear. Not very often. It gets easier.

And the band has played again a few times and we have enjoyed it. I think the audiences have enjoyed it too.

And I think Eamonn has enjoyed it also.



My Story

by Kathryn Duff

Being a twin was a very important part of my life. I learnt so much from my twin brother Andrew and he did from me. Every one of my childhood memories has Andrew at the centre; our 3rd birthday party- our first day at nursery school, him beating me in the school exams in P.5 and getting first in the class. Being a twin was so special yet it felt so natural. People used to ask me what it was like to be a twin and I would wonder 'what's it like not to be?'

We lost Andrew in September 2008 after a short battle with Bipolar disorder. That was 7 years ago. When I heard the news I couldn't understand what I was hearing. The shock was so sudden, so unexpected and so enormous that I spent many months wondering how I should behave. I had always been very happy, sociable and outgoing so it was so foreign to me to feel sad and I felt guilty for upsetting other family members. For that reason I kept my feelings bottled up and put a brave face on things. I continued to see friends but I didn't discuss how I was feeling, thinking that friends might reject me or consider me too much of a burden. Looking back, I should have opened up more, but I wasn't to know I was doing my best.

Andrew always loved Christmas. He loved nothing more than being surrounded by friends and family. When we were younger he would watch the Snowman on repeat. In car journeys in December we would have competitions counting Christmas trees. I am sure he cheated, because he always won! He always organised an epic game of monopoly on Christmas night which went on into the wee hours. He was adamant that every year we would get the largest real Christmas tree we could find. At the Christmas dinner table he always managed to polish off dozens of cocktail sausages and still have room for pavlova for dessert.

Because Andrew loved Christmas so much, and every tradition reminded me of him, the run up to Christmas the first year was particularly difficult. I cried when I saw the first Christmas tree or heard his favourite carol.

This will be our 8th Christmas without Andrew and it still a really emotional time. I wish he was here to light the fire or make us all laugh with his stories and sense of humour. To make Christmas more bearable we made some changes to the day, we changed some traditions and invented new ones. We invited extra friends to Christmas dinner so it wasn't so obvious that there was one less chair at the table.

Some personal guidelines

- We must discover a new life
- We must discover a new commitment
- We must draw from our inner resources
- We must accept our feelings
- We must develop positive attitudes towards past, present and future
- We must learn to live with unanswered questions
- We must reach out to others
- Do remember that you are basically the same person that you were before the crisis
- Do remember that there is light at the end of the tunnel
- Do remember that if you suffer too much or too long, help is available (J. Casey 2001)
- Everyone grieves differently and for different lengths of time
- Take care of yourself—eat properly and try to rest
- Children also experience similar feelings and may need to share in the grief process

“Healing from grief is not the process of forgetting, it is the process of remembering with less pain and more joy”

Elisabeth Kubler Ross

How can bereavement support help?

- Bereavement support provides you with the opportunity to talk about your grief in a safe and understanding environment
- When someone we love dies by suicide, the grieving process can be more complex.

Suicide can greatly affect family relationships:

- Remember the choice was not yours. No one is the sole influence in another's life.
- Wear out your questions, anger, guilt or other feelings until you can let them go. Letting go does not mean forgetting.
- Know that you will never be the same again, but you can survive and even go beyond just surviving

The bereaved by Suicide service provides 1-1 support sessions and group support for anyone aged 18 and over who have lost loved ones through suicide within the Northern Health and Social Care Trust localities. To speak to a support worker or for additional resources please call 028 9441 3544.

Help and support after a loss by suicide

If you are dealing with the suicide of a friend or loved one, it is important to find support to make sense of what has happened, deal with the grief and learn how to live with your loss.

- The pain of suicide loss can't be eased quickly but there are things you can do that will help:
- Take time out - it's ok to give yourself time out from the pain you are experiencing by doing something you enjoy, even if you don't feel like doing it at the time.
- Stay connected and accept support - from friends, family, and support networks. This will reduce your sense of isolation and feelings of loneliness associated with grief.
- Honour the deceased person - talk about them, keep a journal, share memories and photos.
- Stay healthy - eat well, exercise, try to sleep and avoid drugs and alcohol.
- Prioritise daily tasks - only do what is essential, avoid making major decisions until you can think more clearly.
- Ask for help if you need it - talk to a counsellor/psychologist, a helpline like Lifeline, friends and family to find comfort, support and ways to cope.
- Join a suicide bereavement support group - sharing your experience with others who have been through similar experiences will help you realise you are not alone and that you can survive.

It has been a long journey and I know I will always miss Andrew, particularly at milestone moments that I should have been sharing with him. Passing my driving test. Graduating from university. This year I turn 30 and I never imagined that I would be celebrating on my own.

Slowly, however, I do feel like I am able to smile when I remember something we did together, or when I see a film he loved. When I hear David Grey - Babylon, one of his favourite songs, I take it as a sign that he is looking down on me, looking out for his little twin sister, like he always did. Opening up about my bereavement in counselling sessions has really helped me process what happened to Andrew, and I will always be grateful to Danielle for being such a wonderful listener.



Dear Mammy

by Elaine Anderson

It has been 4 years since I got that devastating news regarding your departure. Not a day goes by that I do not think of you. The past 4 years have been a scary roller-coaster ride which was very close to a tragic ending, but then again I do not need to tell you that. I now know a little of why your roller-coaster ride came to such an ending, as I was very close to experiencing it also but again I do not need to tell you that. I believe that it is due to you that my ride has taken the right turn (let's call the other the 'left turn').

I now know why everything was such a struggle, why it always seemed like such an effort to force that fake smile even though your eyes were always sad, why you were always tired even though your bed was often slept in and why no matter how much you were reminded that you have so much in your life, you just could not shake that horrible feeling which I now call the 'black cloud'. I now know that 'black cloud' does not discriminate against colour, race, sexuality, family support or how much money you have in your bank, it does not care.

Some people say that if you take the 'left turn' it is a selfish act, it is far from it. You see when that 'black cloud' wears you down to the point that there is only a pinhole of sunlight getting in and no matter how fast you put the foot down you can never reach that sunlight. No matter how much fresh air, exercise, socialising and change of sceneries you try, that cloud follows you. I remember being on honeymoon and no matter how far away I was from the obvious shade, that 'black cloud' was creeping up behind me. You dread waking up to what the next day is going to bring (that is if you slept at all), you become withdrawn, paranoid, negative, irritable and anxious. You feel like a stranger amongst friends. You feel like the elephant in the room.

You now become aware of how it is affecting your family. Do you want to put them through this agony of watching you battle this 'black cloud'? It is because you love and care for them so much that's when that junction starts to appear. Would it be better in the long run?

I believe if it was not for you, I would not be writing this today. You have taught me so much in the time we shared. You have taught me that even strong people need help and support (I cannot even imagine how difficult it was for you battling this 'black cloud' for so long, whilst also bringing up 3 children mainly on your own). I take my hat off to you, as I couldn't have done it. You have taught me that compliance is vital and that it is okay to accept help. You have taught me to face up to that 'black cloud' (and a few other things) and fight with all my might (although some days depending on what all is throw at me, the 'black cloud' wins that battle. You have taught me to speak about things as everything is better out

Personal Guidelines



*In the midst of the storms of grief,
there is always a Lifeline*

in the open. You have taught me to move away from things that are going to hinder my recovery. You have taught me that I do not want my family dreading what mood I am going to be in and how many tears there are going to be that day. You have taught me that I want to enjoy my time with my little girl and husband and to no longer force those smiles. You have taught me that isolation is not the best idea. You have taught me to start embracing what I am good at rather than what I fail at. You have taught me that it was like to fight that 'black cloud' for so long with little support and compliance and most importantly you have taught me to take the right turn.



I know I still have a rocky road to travel on my recovery journey but with the professional help, support of friends and a loving husband along with cuddles from my daughter, I am starting to see more sunshine. I am beginning to accept that my 'black cloud' may never disappear but as long as I am battling it face on, rather than letting it creep up behind me, I feel it may be ok.

I am sorry for any worries I caused you when we were growing up, and I am sorry I let you down in your time of need.

Thank you for being the best mother and friend anyone could have been blessed with. Thank you for your guidance and as much as I hate to admit it, you were right on a lot of things. I am very privileged to have such a strong person to call my Mammy, I will always love and miss you. Rest in peace and continue with your guidance as I know I definitely need it.

After reading this can I ask that next time you roll your eyes and say just get over it to someone who is battling the 'black cloud', think twice. You do not know what pain that person is going through. The next time you discourage a person to accept professional help or take the prescribed medications for the 'black cloud' think twice, you do not know how difficult it was to accept that help, it is their decision and you would not do it to a diabetic, cardiac or cancer patient so don't do it to someone battling this illness.

As you can imagine this was not an easy decision to share these thoughts. It is not meant to be read in a negative way and it is not meant to hurt or offend. It has been written solely to try and raise awareness and understanding and I hope I have achieved this even slightly.

Safely Home

by Suzette Butler

When recently offered the opportunity to accompany my husband and his work colleagues to Chicago and Indianapolis, I felt that this was the distraction I desperately needed. My heightened anxiety, fear of going to sleep, terror of entering the garage and the compulsion to visit my son's grave were spiralling and I needed something to launch me from this predicament.

The novelty of my first visit to the States proved to wane pretty quickly when we arrived late on the Saturday to a minus 5 temperature. Whilst icy cold winds and rain ensued the following day on our trip around this incredibly windy city, I was beginning to feel 'normal'. But boy, did it hit me when I didn't see it coming, that incredible physical blow resonating through your chest like a vampire hunter striking a stake through a heart. The shakes followed and the uncontrollable sobbing and desperation bowled me over like a huge tsunami. I was having my daily despair, remembering the finality of my son's absence, knowing that I would never see him again.

During the first few weeks of Luke's departure, I would waken every morning and have to tell myself – my son is dead, he's not coming back – and then the terrible anxiety would last for hours and leave me a totally exhausted wreck. Now in Indianapolis I was faced with not being on my home territory – no bolt hole to retreat to, no place to hide and cry during the day. How was I going to cope?

Attending the American Coating Show, a world wide conference and display for chemical manufacturers, meant that I had to represent the European division of the world's biggest Chinese colour manufacturer, talking technical to potential customers and referring them to the most appropriate chemical specialist. Putting on a brave, professional face and engaging in cheery conversation exhausted me but I had my secret weapon. In my handbag I had the draft of the poem I read at my son's funeral and I would focus on two lines, repeating them in my head like a mantra to get me through those times when I felt I was going to collapse with grief.

**All the pain and grief is over, Every restless tossing passed;
I am now at peace forever, Safely home in Heaven at last.**

I had been so overwhelmed with how sad my son must have felt, I realised these lines were about him, he was safe and I would see him again.

On my return home from the exhausting flights from the States, I felt a new strength. I knew that I had to address our garage where I had found Luke on that tragic night. With the help of my parents and my daughter we worked tirelessly filling two skips with old

Goodnight

I go into your bedroom
To tuck you in at night
I want to say I love you
To tuck you in real tight
I want to stroke your hair
Look into your eyes blue and bright
But I can no longer do these things
You went into the light
I gave you life, you took it
Forever I will wonder why?
I will take it to my grave
Until the day I die
Always I will ask myself
Why? Why? Why?

Angela Knott

Suicide

The darkness fell, there was no light
No glimpse of hope on that dark dark night
I felt so alone that no one cared
I had a pain, a hurt deep inside
I could not ask for help, I had my pride
So that night I made sure I died
Now looking down from above
I see the hurt in the ones I love
I see how so many people cared
How I wish I had shared
All of my heartache all of my pain
I would ask for help if I could do it again

Angela Knott

The Fields

I walked the field tonight
The way we used to do

I looked up at the bright blue sky
And in my thoughts
You

I heard the trill of bird song
Saw the sunset in its every changing hue
And always in my thoughts
You

For my heart is cracked and broken
Torn apart right in two

I walked the field tonight
How I wish I walked with you

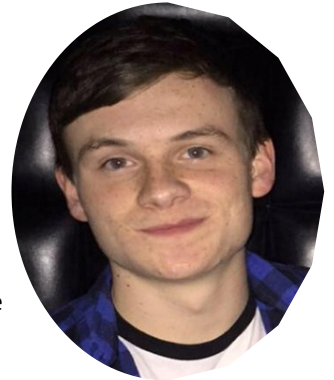
Angela Knott

In My Heart

I hold you in my heart
I will hold you there forever
Even though we are apart
We will always be together
We had a special bond.
One that was like no other
I am sending you my love
From your dearest darling Mother

Angela Knott

toys, super soakers, roller skates, scooters, sagging 'pop-up' tents, memories of happier times and general junk. Despite the tears tripping me, we cleared the spot where we had discovered Luke. The feeling of relief and euphoria enveloped us and we cried, not from hopelessness or sadness but as if a trapped, hurt little bird had suddenly been released and cheerfully flew away. We knew that Luke was with us and he was happy and relieved for us. From that day, no one is afraid to enter the garage; the dread is gone, the air lighter and we can look to the future.



Confronting my fears and despair has helped me move on. Maybe just baby steps for now, but 12 weeks on I am now in a different, more hopeful place. I am indebted to my family, friends, my son's friends and all of the wonderful health professionals who have helped my family and I begin to cope, value what is most important in life and look to enjoying the here and now whilst knowing that someday in the future our wee Luke will be reunited with us.

This is my adaptation of 'Safely Home' – I hope that you might find some solace in its lines as it has helped me:

**I am home in Heaven, dear ones;
Oh, so happy and so bright;
There is perfect joy and beauty in this everlasting light.
All the pain and grief is over,
Every restless tossing passed;
I am now at peace forever,
Safely home in Heaven at last.**

**There is work still waiting for you,
So you must not idly stand;
Do it now, while life remaineth,
You shall rest in Jesus' land.**

**When that work is all completed,
He will gently call you Home;
Oh, the rapture of that meeting,
Oh, the joy to see you come!**

In memory of my darling son Luke – who left us on Thursday 28th January 2016.

Our Luke...took himself out to the garage

by Donna J Thompson

It's 6.25am on 28th January 2016, the day upon which after 49 years on this earth I knew the burden of age at the expense of more deserving youth.

The phone rings...Hi Suzette, " Donna, you can't go into work today, you can't go for a while. Our Luke took himself out to the garage in the middle of the night and hanged himself. You have to come down. We need to do lists. We have a lot to arrange....." More talking, but I couldn't take it in. I remember saying, " I'm on my way."

I sat, still, did that just happen. Did I just take a call. Have I dreamt this. Luke, my sister's gorgeous wee son, eighteen years old, full of life and devilment and joy and sass and love.....dead.

I sat. I got up.....in a daze....exploded by my eighteen year old and fifteen year old daughters running from their bedrooms:

" Who is it? Is someone dead? No one calls at 6.25am. Is it Grandad?"

I can't say it. It will make it real. I am on the tip of the edge of the precipice between their happy lives and their descent into a trough of misery, pain, incomprehension and horror.

I can't tell them. The words come out razor blades on my tongue, I collapse. They keen and wail, screaming, in horror, in horror. My son grabs me. He holds me. " Oh God Mum, oh God...." My husband brings shape and sense to the scene. The doer, the rock, the support, the steel beam who carries us all.

I run to the utility room. I scream and scream and scream.

Mums. My parents, not old, about to age centuries within hours. Suzette, in shock, son dead, police gone, paramedics gone, husband and daughter being collected from airports. Eldest daughter dripping in the blood of the wounds sustained when she broke through the window of the garage execution chamber and opened the door to the horror and the sight of our beautiful boy's savagely lifeless body.

The miasma starts. Tea, tea, tea, hugged, sorry, you must feel terrible, I can't begin to understand what it's like, tea, tea....

Luke's body is here.....oh the blessed comfort. He's ours again for a while. Children hugging their cousin, daughters kissing their brother. Notes being written and put in his pathetically tiny jacket. His grin fixed, his body lifeless. His body our comfort.

Days and nights spent with him. All of us. Keeping him company. Deriving comfort from him. Blanket over him to keep him warm through the night. Our children standing sentinel over their beloved cousin and brother. The essence of what life is in the grip of death.

Funeral arrangements.....courage to read at his Mass? Courage to bring up the gifts? Courage to carry his coffin? We'll see.....

Miss You

I will never let you go
We will never be apart
You will always be deep within my heart

For I hear you in the bird song
And in the summer rain
I see you in the sunrise
The dawn of a new day
I hear your laughter in the wind
I wish that I could answer
The things that I would say
But the most of all I love you
And miss you every day

Angela Knott

Broken Heart

I stand in the shower and cry
It washes my tears away
But it will never wash away the pain
When you left us that day

I have a pain within my heart
A pain that's here to stay
A pain that never end and never goes away
For suicide it shatters, it rips your world apart

You no longer have a 'Normal'
But a shattered broken heart.

Angela Knott

Ok

How are you doing that's what they say
Well I have struggled through another day
But I hear myself say ok
But my heart is broken with a deep pain inside
The sorrow and grief it will not subside
It started that minute, that second you died
I miss you so much you filled me with pride
Now tears filled my eyes and run down my face
And beautiful memories fill your empty space
I loved you in life and in death I still do
And most of all I know you loved me too.

Angela Knott

The Table

We sit around the table
And look at your empty chair
How we all wish that you
Were still sitting there
We miss your jokes and laughter
You brought us so much joy
My heart is filled with pride
For you my darling boy
But all too soon you left us
You left an empty space
Forever at my table you will always have a place
I wish once more we could be together
I would see your smiling face
Sitting at the table in your old familiar place

Angela Knott

The graveside, the flowers, the prayers, the departure, the overness.

Return to life? No, just a sad pathetic parody of going from A to B, doing X,Y and Z. Not feeling, not hoping, not living, not coping. " It's a con trick, life's a con trick. We're only here to die. It's all about distracting us from death....life.....it's a pathetic effort to put our time in until the real reason for life...death ...happens" Suzette agrees with me. Oh the sad agreement...

Work, panic attacks, crying, anxiety....collapse. Suzette comes. Hospital, its grief, its natural, you're not going mad, Suzette takes me home. Suzette's collapse swinging overhead, about to happen, about to crash, but requiring to wait until she is sure her wee sister is ok.

Diazepam existence....block it out when you can, cry when you can, eat, it's tasteless, it hurts, but eat. Madness. Who was I before. Could I really do that before the world ended.

Hope, counselling, outpouring, understanding, rationalising, the journey into daylight starts. Here I am, 12 weeks have passed and I can start to feel again. I can recognise joy. I can feel life. I don't know how this happened. Luke has brought us all together. We cleave to each other, a huge family, a massive clan talking of our grief, our hope, our loss and our light...together. Broken, but joined together in an aggregate of what's left of our humanity. Our journey has just begun, but we are slowly travelling, back into life and hope. This story is not over. This story will never end until we are gone. Luke waits for us, full of life and devilment and joy and sass and love....

An Aunts tale.

Owen

by Barney Glasgow

Owen was a quiet gentle child. He was always careful never to hurt another living creature. As he grew up though his teens and twenties he retained that gentle nature. However it did not serve him well as he was often bullied. I tried to teach him skills to defend himself but he did not have the emotional make up to acquire them. He did have nice friends and most of the time he seemed happy. Girls were very fond of his gentle nature. He was very close to me. Hardly a day passed without us being in contact with each other.

Then his brother died, it was sudden and unexpected. He was a very fit young man, his death was put down to sudden death syndrome. I went through a very bad time after he died, Owen and I became even closer. He worked in a grocer shop close to where I live. Every evening I would call in with him after he finished work. Then one evening, Owen was not in the shop. The owner told me it was strange, Owen never missed work. All he could tell me was he thought Owen had been very quiet for the last few days, he said he thought that was unusual as Owen was always joking with the girls in the shop.

I phoned him, went to his flat but could not get a response. His neighbours said they had seen him about so I thought Ok he is in a mood about something, he did have them, and will be back at work tomorrow.

Two days later he called with me, unshaven, unwashed and looking ill. I got the Doctor out who said he had severe depression. He was put in hospital, during his stay in hospital it was discovered he had become schizophrenic. He came out of hospital and into Praxis. I was told he would never recover but his illness could be managed. He was good most days, a few trips back to hospital but he understood his illness and most of the time he coped well with it. His greatest regret was that he was no longer allowed to work. We spent a lot of time together. He was a mate, a best friend as well as being my son. We had some good times, lunches together, walks in the forest, Christmas, Birthdays. Despite his illness he loved life and tried to live as best he could. He was happy most of the time and I was happy for him. We laughed a lot together, mostly at each other. There was a

Disaster

It is a bright September day, a Friday. We are having lunch outside a café in the pleasant sunshine, we spend the afternoon together. Planning what we will do next week, I am away for the weekend, we have planned to meet Monday afternoon. Sunday, shortly after 12 o'clock midday, Owen leaves his flat, walks to the old Bridge over the River Bann and jumps in the River. We do not recover his body until the following Sunday.

Goodbye

I never got to say I love you
I never got to say goodbye
You should have been by my bedside
Heard me breathe my last sigh
But you left this world before me
Long before your time

I never got to say I love you
I never got to say goodbye
I think about you daily
You are my pride and joy
My dearest darling Scottie
You are my precious boy

Angela Knott

Darkness and Light

I sit alone in the darkness
I see no hope no shore
The waves of grief and sorrow
Wash over me once more
No one knows my heartache
No one knows my pain
I will never be the same again
The old me I once was nothing remains
But light it follows darkness
As sunshine follows rain
And heavens gates will open
I will see you once again

Angela Knott

United in Grief

Here we all are united in grief
I look out of the window at autumns falling leaf

The end of the summer the end of the day
I will never forget when you went away

Just as the leaf falls from the tree
It returns to the earth disappears from view

Then in the spring the tree buds once more
A reminder of growth and what we had before

You stood strong and proud just like the tree
You grew in the sunshine but then darkness came and I lost my son

But I have my memories of days in the sun
Of the joy that you brought me the laughter and fun

I sit in the sunshine and I miss your face
But I know in my heart you are in a better place

Angela Knott

I am at home when I get the news, there is shock, disbelief, a sense this can't be real. It takes time for it to sink in to my inner self. Then the flood of emotions. Why? Why did I not notice something was wrong on Friday? What had I done wrong, could I have prevented this from happening? Was I guilty of neglect? Was I to blame for this in some way? As the pain and darkness settled down around me, I closed in on myself. I had few words to say but inside I was screaming. My emotions were so mixed and merged.

They defied an explanation I have to be brutally honest about my feelings, though some may be shocked at the revelations. There was the poor Owen bit, why did he do it? And the poor me bit, what am I going to do now? I was not sure where one started and the other ended. They were blended one into the other. To deny I had these feelings of self pity would be to deny part of myself, is not much of what disturbs of a selfish nature? If only we will seek deep enough we may find a segment of truth in it and I found truth necessary for my own peace.

Redemption

I needed help, I could not go through this on my own. Friends and family were trying to fix me but I was not broken. I was deeply wounded, I needed to heal because inner wounds are not visible, they are often ignored but they are just as deadly as a severed artery if left unattended. So I put fear and pride aside and phoned Danielle, a bereaved by suicide worker who got me a councillor Susan. Susan was of immense help. I also began to spend time alone to meditate and release my inner pain also I became part of a group started by Danielle where I was able to further explore my feelings. I did not attempt to build my life around pain, to me that would be keeping something self destructive inside me. I let the pain flow out of me to create an inner void where in stillness, peace could take root and grow.

There is an instinct which stills the lips, that would speak of that which cannot be spoken of in words but only experienced in the heart and soul what shall I say.

I explored the river of the soul, gone down past the darkness and pain to a place of light and peace. It is a path open to all but which few I feel embark on, it is in that stillness I find him. That place of love, light and peace that I made my heart. I did so because a place of pain would not be a fitting place to keep one that I loved.

It was my way. It still is. It was my journey through the valley of darkness to the mountain of light. My hope is that many in their own way find and follow that path through the night guided by the stars of hope and love to their own golden dawn of peace



Hope

by Barney Glasgow

If any of you are feeling down, lost lonely in pain or despair at this moment. If any of you have suffered loss, and who amongst us is there that is exempt from loss. Be it the loss of a cherished toy as a child or that of someone we loved. Or if it be that you feel overcome by the problems of life. It is of the utmost importance that you do not allow conditions of this nature to settle in your mind.

The world abounds with half truths we often hear the cliché “accept the things you cannot change”

This is only true when we refer to the past. If some disaster has befallen us we cannot change that “but to change the things we cannot accept or which we find unacceptable in our life is a different matter” we are never more miserable than when we believe we have no power over circumstances. This of course refers to our inner circumstances when we are in pain, despair or at odds with our life it is often not easy to find a solution that will satisfy our thoughts and bring peace to our minds. Indeed the loss of someone close that we love, especially if it is suddenly will have a dramatic effect on us which will take some time to come to terms with.

However deep in despair we may be, we can come through it by simply a matter of taking the right steps in the first place. We should not be afraid to ask for help we have all done so in the past. Asked for medical help, material help etc and we never thought much about doing so. When it comes to our feelings it's different, we are often afraid to express them openly, to cry in front of others lest they judge us as weak. To talk about the hurt inside of us when we have emotional pain we should express, if we hide it away inside it will always be there. The more we try to hide it, to push it down, the more it will fight to come to the surface.

But can we ever be pain free?

Yes, there is hope. No matter what disaster has befallen us, however great our loss, we can achieve peace in our minds and hearts. We can let go of pain. It is not always easy, for sometimes we feel the pain is all we have to hold on to, of course this applies only to those who have experienced loss. We can remember in a different way, have different feelings about loss, we can remember with love and tenderness and peace. We acquire this by letting go of the harsh pain, allowing it to flow out of us and love and peace to take its place. We are not forgetting nor should we try to, we will have moments of sadness, the pain of too much tenderness. The pain of the past can be transformed but what of the pain of the future?

Many live in dread of it, fearful of what it will bring. These fears are brought about by living outside ourselves, the past or the future cannot come into the present unless we allow it to. Or perhaps it would be more truthful to say that we bring the past and future into the present and then proceed to wonder why we are ill at ease.

If we had not hope to rely on we could never resolve the situation. Hope, a small word that brings big rewards. Forget about your mind for a moment, live from your heart. To

Christmas Without You

Every day without you since you had to go

Is like summer without sunshine

And winter without snow

Oh I love you so much you will never know

I wish that I would talk to you

There's so much that I would say

I love you and I miss you every single day

Life has changed so very much

Since you went away

I miss the bond between us

And I miss your kind support

You're in my mind and in my heart

And every Christmas thought

I'll always feel you close to me

And though you're far from sight

I'll look for you among the stars

That shine on Christmas night

My star, my shining light!

Angela Knott

Darkness

I gave you life, you took it
On a dark and windy night
You walked into the field
For you, you saw no light
The darkness it enfolded you
And yet you were so bright
My shining star, my son, my boy
You walked into the light

You don't know how much I miss you
Since that dark and windy night
You thought what you had to do
Would make you feel alright
I wish that you had talked to me
On that dark and windy night

For a mother will always love you
And this one always will
My shining star, my son, my boy
My Angel shining bright

Angela Knott

live from your heart it is often necessary to lose your mind, do what your hearts tells you. Find someone to talk to, cry if you need to, let it come out, good or bad. By being empty you are making room for hope, it will lead you to peace. By midnight when you feel lonely it will be a lamp in your tower of darkness, it will lead you through the night towards the morning and into the light of day. Be it a day of sunshine and showers, hope will be your shield against the showers.

Have moments of silence and stillness regardless of what is going on around you "the world can wait a moment in those moments of stillness". Endeavour to lift your thoughts above the cares and troubles of the world. In doing so you will create your own inner light you can become a beacon to others. A light in the tower at midnight, a solitary star on a dark night. You can become a love that embraces all. A compassion that has no limits however life is at this moment for you reach for the torch of hope, ignite it and go forward.

Great are the rewards that await you and in your giving you are also receiving more of what you are giving away.

That is the message of hope.

Letter to a Grieving Mother

by Angela Knott

I wish I didn't have to write this letter and I wish you didn't have to read it. We are both mothers who have a child that has taken his or her life. I don't like the term "lost a child" you are careless if you lose something. We had the most precious gift, a child and no matter what age, should they be sixteen or sixty, they are our child.

I got the news of Scott's death on 5th January 2015. The police came to my door and told me the news. I felt my world collapse around me, I felt I was in the eye of a storm everything spun around me, yet voices said who do we contact.

I felt like I had failed Scott. Why did he do this? Why did he feel this was the only answer? A big part of your life will be why? As a mother you grew this child inside you, you had a bond 9 months before anyone else. You nursed your child, you love and protect your child

You will question everything and look for answers that are not there. Suicide shatters, it shatters your heart, you feel the pain is unbearable and you will cry until you are physically sick. You will feel you want to die just to be with your child. I know, I have been there. Bereavement by suicide changes you suddenly, abruptly, shockingly it is brutal, cruel and the pain never leaves. If our loved ones knew the pain it would cause I don't think they would take their own life.

You will see the best and worst in people, true friends will stand by you at this time others will disappear. The kindness of people can know no bounds. Compassion, empathy, reaching out and helping; take it as you need support.

You need to sit and cry with a friend, you need to say your child's name, remember the precious time you had together. People will cross the street to avoid you as they do not know what to say. So keep your good friends close. The one's who will sit with you as you cry, pass you tissues, hug you and hold your hand. These people can often come from places you least expect, relationships can take on a new depth, friendships can grow stronger and acquaintances can be strengthened, new friendships can be forged with people who have the same common experience.

I joined the Suicide Support group and made new friends. We are in the same boat, some days the sea is calm and some days we hit a storm but we support each other. I met Karen, mother of Ryan who took his own life at nineteen years of age. Scott was twenty seven when he took his own life. We bonded over the pain we both felt for our sons we loved them very much. Love never dies and the deeper the grief the deeper the love as we have sat together and had coffee and cried but felt better for it.

Grief

I am a grieving Mother
My heart is broke in two
I have cried a million tears
Since the day I lost you
I feel so lost and broken
I often wonder why?
Did you know much I loved you
Why did you have to die?
Suicide it shatters, it tears your life to bits
It turns your life inside out
No happiness exists

I can only pray to God up above
That we will meet again
You will feel your Mothers love
A love that never ended
A love so deep and true
My dearest darling son
I'll never stop loving you

Angela Knott

Heartache

I live each day with the heartache
I live each day with the pain
Each second each minute each day
Feels like I have lost you again
My heart its filled with sorrow
My world it has no joy

For I have lost my son my dearest darling boy
You filled my life with laughter for 27 years
But now my eyes are filled with so many tears
I cry because I miss you
And for what might have been
I hope that you can hear me
When I talk to you at night
I love you and I miss you
My star, my guiding light

Angela Knott

You will heal over time, you will never forget, because you have the scars of grief to remind you. I cannot tell you how to grieve, I can tell you your life has changed. You will have good days and bad days. A song or smell will remind you of your loved one and may make you smile or cry.

Remember the good times with your loved one, celebrate their life. Don't let the end overtake your memories. They did what they did because they felt it was the only way to get peace. It was their decision. You will never know why? And "if only" does not work.

You are strong, you may not feel it but you have come to this stage. Battered, broken, weary but with a broken heart that is held together by the love for your child.

As I wrote before, Love never Dies.

You are not alone



Atlanta

by Anoushka McCullough

4 weeks today and my tears still flow,
So many things I still need to know,
But those answers will never come,
And I will always be your proud Mum,

If only you told us more of what was happening,
In your head and what demons you were battling,
We could have worked out some way,
To deal with it and get through another day,

Each day at a time, piece by piece,
You never even got to meet your wee niece,
Oh how you would love Ella's smiles and cuddles,
It's enough to take away your worries and troubles,

Although you were an adult and eighteen,
It was always my baby girl that I seen,
Setting up your wee home just down the street,
You wanted it to be your own retreat,

So proud you stood on your own two feet,
And got Tyson to make your family complete,
A big gentle giant he turned out to be,
For your depression you hoped he'd be key,

Something dark happened in your head that day,
And you could see no other way,
To deal with the hurt and pain in your head,
Which for us leaves so many things unsaid,

You ended your life when in your prime,
We'll never know what you could have achieved in time,
So Dad, Craig and I have to be there for one another,
This is a long road from which we will never recover,

Feel No Guilt In Laughter

Feel no guilt in laughter
They would know how much you care
Feel no sorrow in a smile
That they are not here to share.

You cannot grieve forever
They would not want you to
They would hope that you could carry on
The way you always do.

So talk about the good times
And the way you showed you cared
The days you spent together
And all the happiness you shared.

Let memories surround you
A word someone may say
Will suddenly recapture a time, an hour, a day,
That brings them back as clearly
As though they were still here
And fill you with the feeling
That they are always near.

For if you keep those moments
You will never be apart
And they will live forever
Locked safe within your heart.

Anonymous

In Search of a Cure

Does the pain ever lessen?
Will it ever feel less real?
As I dig in the depths
For what my conscious mind fears.

If I let down my barriers
Which have protected so long
If I feel the emotions
Will I accept and move on?

Your memory brings comfort
But I'm crippled inside
As I'll never get answers
No reason as to why

I've been trying to forget you
Like you didn't exist
Avoiding all feelings
And thoughts I dismiss

Surrounded by darkness
And no-one did see
How lost you were
When you decided to leave

Could I have stopped you?
Would you have listened to me?
Did I matter at all?
Did you know what you mean to me?

I respect your decision
And pray you have peace
But for us left behind
The heartache won't cease

I trust God has a plan
And a lesson to teach
Through emotions so raw
And easily reached

Does the feeling bring healing?
Of that I'm not sure
But I'll trust in the process
And search for my cure

Gillian Bradley

We need to grieve, cry and shout,
As we no longer have you about,
Those around us don't know what to say,
Some people hug and some people pray,

All ways are accepted and are very kind,
As you are never ever far from our mind,
We talk about you with smiles all the time,
We keep saying that you will always shine,

Shine bright like a diamond,
High above the earth and beyond,
You're now an angel flying high,
Beautiful like diamonds in the sky

Love you forever
Mum x

12 Months

12 months have in a blur gone by
Few days have our eyes been dry
Memories are what help us carry on
To wake and see each new dawn



Anoushka McCullough

Dad

by Shane Mc Gann

Dad,

Walk with pride into the kingdom of Heaven and rest in the peace that you deserve.

I find it hard to put my feelings of confusion into words, and I doubt I will ever fully understand what you were thinking.

Never let it doubt you, how much Mum, Louise and Myself loved you and I ask that you give us the strength to cope.

Recently I couldn't help but think about Uncle Tommy's Poem

"The Big Strong Man" and I guess it always amused me when I thought of you in that light as "The Skinny Strong Man" – and that's what you are.

I will always remember and be thankful for how hard you worked to get us what we needed or wanted, and you always had strength in our family's times of need. I appreciate that!

I guess it's my turn to be strong for the family and I hope I do you proud.

It's made me think that as strong as a person is, often it's hard to look for their weakness, and I guess that's what this is – 'a moment of weakness'.

I don't think I need to tell you that I'm angry and scared, so I hope you'll bear with me. I'll never forget what an amazing Dad you were and I will remember with fondness the happiness you shared with Mum.

Shane

5th February 2016

by Kathleen Cassidy

Its your 33rd birthday my darling son. Today your brother, two sisters, two nieces and two nephews are here with me having dinner. We are celebrating your life. The kids have brought cakes and candles. They've sung Happy Birthday to uncle Patrick, that's how we're coping, keeping your handsome face alive and here with us. Our memories are precious and you will always be included in every part of our lives.

Love Always,
Mum xxx

Brother

Charles, Chuck or Charlie,
just whatever you prefer.
A decent harmless fella
who never seemed to care.

His life revolved round Carol,
their children and the twins.
he played darts for the Fiddlers
and followed Arsenal for his sins.

He loved to go on holidays
and he loved a bit of craic.
sure he'd tell you all about it
whenever he got back.

You'd often see him walking
with his head phones and his hat
and if he thought you'd like to
he'd stop and have a chat.

Now for some unknown reason
which we'll never comprehend
he decided it was over
and brought his life to an end.

Now all we have are memories
of that smiling happy face,
so let's pray that God now holds him
in a very special place.



Love always, Moya and Tommy

Friends

Friends are flowers
Special in their own way
Bringing joy and comfort
Brightening our day

Sometimes they will talk a lot
As others say nothing at all
But they are always there to catch us
Just in case we fall

They let us know who we are
Not who they want us to be
No need to pick words or hide feelings
They allow us to be free

If you feel you ain't got any
don't give up or despair
Just stop and look around you
There is always someone who cares

Who cares enough to listen
To what you have to say
When you are happy, they will laugh with you
When you are sad, they won't walk away

So don't be feeling lonely
Or at life be dismayed
Put a little trust in providence
And find a friend today

Barney Glasgow

Poetry from the Heart



*As each day passes
may the memories of your loved ones
help fill the hole in your heart*

Musings

He seemed to be so happy
That lazy day we met
I could never have imagined
He would only see two more sunsets

There was no sign of sadness
No hint of inner pain
We were joking as we parted
But I would never hear him laugh again

I wonder what transpired in this mind on that last day
Was it some deep inner sadness
Or was his soul elated by that last sunsets golden rays

I wonder what he thought about
Before he went to sleep
Had he already decided
To enter those waters deep

Was life so much a burden
With pain too great to bear
had he come to believe
That no one really cared

Did he cry himself to sleep that night
Feeling sad and all alone
An outcast from humanity
This earth no longer home

Or had he found some inner peace
That I fail to understand
And in that peace decided
His fate by his own hand

Had all his fears been banished
Was he eager for to leave
Were his smiles and happy gestures
Meant to comfort or deceive

These are futile questions
For I shall never know
As life is passing by me
Like this deep river flows

Standing here upon this bridge
Where he took his last steps
That same spot, where on a winter night
So many bitter years I wept

Yet every year was needed
To wash away the scales
Of the pain and bitter darkness
That enclosed me like a veil

I no longer require answers
To speculate or judge
I need only to remember you
With gentleness and love

The sun is shining on the water
Bright clouds are in the sky
Once again you are here beside me
You can never die

I hear you whisper in the wind
See you dance in the leaves
You spirit is here with me
What need have I to grieve

I let you blend into my heart
The two of us are one
Inseparable in the spirit
Like the sunlight and the sun

How fleeting are all images
How temporary are all forms
One moment we observe them
The next one they are gone

But the spirit ever liveth
In dimensions high above
And we can unite with it
When we call on it with love

Barney Glasgow