

# WALKING THROUGH GRIEF

by

©Joan Adams Burchell

“Death robs us of our loved one but is unable to rob us of our sweet memories of that love.”

Canadian ISBN 978-0-9783056-5-9

## PREFACE

The following are some of the poems I wrote from the time my husband was diagnosed with terminal cancer; the dread news and then the months following. They are *in no particular order* so they would fit the pages.

Five months after Ted died and I had been reading of others who kept a log of their grieving, I realised that the poems I wrote all the time through Ted's illness while I was caring for him were indeed, a record of my grieving; grieving through that entire time.

May I suggest that you keep a Journal and write down your feelings, regardless of what they are. It will help and nobody else needs to see it. You can destroy it whenever you feel like it.

The devastation and anguish of grief touches, penetrates and erodes your soul. Your loved one (a part of you) is gone forever and nothing will ever be the same. After a time, you think you will survive. You laugh, you busy yourself, but then .... you cry again. It is *normal* and *all* of the things you feel are *normal*. Please know that! *It is okay* to be angry - even with God, for He understands.

Loneliness is a heartless, lethal enemy and so I fight it with looking for something beautiful each day. It has helped *me*.

Beauty is all around me and I know is gradually but surely obliterating all the waste and will renew my soul. Life may never be the same but I am sure there is still something good for me amongst all God's wondrous beauty.

I have felt for so long that there was something that I was intended to do. In retrospect, could it be that this private journey, through poetry, could possibly provide help in some small way to someone else who is grieving? - Joan Adams Burchell

Dedicated

to

Ted

## For You

A book I've always wanted to write;  
the topic, I didn't know.  
Today, reading through my poems,  
the theme and progress shows  
Quite clearly - In my deepest thoughts,  
my intimate talks with God,  
I was grieving; and it shows  
as I turn each page, like sod -  
Feelings (seeds, flowers, trees),  
scattered, planted, growing,  
That God's promise "This too shall pass"  
was ink in my pen - me not knowing.  
I pray this private diary  
will help you in your grief  
And may you as you take each step,  
each day find blessed relief.

With love,

Joan Adams Burchell

## Today's Prayer

Thank you Father for the sun  
and for the brisk, cold air.  
Thank you for the restless wind  
that ruffles through my hair.

Thank you God that I can see  
and breathe and feel this day,  
Feel it for both Ted and me  
and for our good friend, "Jay".

Thank you for good times we've had,  
the three of us, together.  
Please help me now through each new day,  
through days of stormy weather.

Make me a blessing, like a tree -  
tall, strong and sheltering  
With arms to hold my loved one;  
help to ease the fear and hurting.

Thank you God for loving me  
for it's love that makes me strong.  
I take it and give it and use it again  
because I've passed it along.

(Jay was our dog, who passed three months to the day before Ted.)

Simply Me  
(fear)

Help me God that I may see  
Each day, the beauty hidden 'round me;  
And help me God that I may know  
That I am contributing love that shows.  
May I see it in another's eyes  
That they see my love that never dies.  
Help me God that I may be  
The hidden beauty around those like me.

No Title  
(hope)

Thank you Father for the sky,  
For the light-patches peeking through clouds so high.  
Clouds that are dark will finally pass by  
And I'll look up and see a beautiful sky.

“Oh, to be able to reach out and touch someone.”

No Title  
(despair)

A vast, ebony blank has engulfed my brain;  
despair clouds my eyes  
As if it would that I do not see the waste  
as my loved-one dies.

Wracked with pain, too weak to move,  
his eyes search mine to see  
The love he knows is in my heart,  
the love twixt him and me.

This love he'll carry where'st he goes  
so now will make me strong.  
My eyes will smile for my dearest love  
and this love will carry him on -

On to the arms of our Saviour  
where pain will no longer be.  
I give thanks to God who gave His love,  
through me, for him to see.

A Reminder  
(thankful)

Thank you Father for the sun  
Shining down on all You've done;  
Coaxing out the crocus' bloom  
To chase away the winter's gloom.  
Unfolding every tiny bud  
On trees, bushes, plants and shrub.  
Springtime is my time of year -  
A time to trust - to end the fear  
Of winter's cold, engulfing doom  
And pain that tore down much too soon.  
Spring is hope of things to come,  
Promise that battles will be won;  
Courage, as yellow-dandelions flower  
In places that other plants shrivel and cower,  
A knowing that life will carry on  
As surely as watching each new dawn.  
A rainbow is all that separates  
This life from one through heaven's gates -  
And spring bursts forth in all her splendour -  
A myriad of colour so we will remember.

Thank you Alice  
(in shock)

I met my kindred spirit  
on a path the other day.  
The road looked steep before me  
and I didn't want to sway.  
I took one glimpse into her eyes  
and felt a strength go deep  
Within my being, flooding through.  
It was then I knew I'd keep  
On going o'er the hill with faith,  
knowing again that He  
Would see my loved-one reaching out  
and there His arms would be.

Where I Am  
(feeling uneasy)

Thank you God for loving me  
no matter where I am.  
Thank you for protection given  
as only You can.  
It matters not where I roam  
for wherever I may be  
I can never be where You are not  
and that is plain to see.

My Garden  
(uneasy)

When I know not what else I can do  
I don't bake bread nor make a stew;  
My little garden calls to me -  
I dig, I weed, or plant a tree.  
In autumn just to turn the soil  
It never seems to me like toil  
For out in air that's fresh and clean  
I feel a calm, God-like, serene.  
The earth takes all my cares away  
And assures me promise of a new day.

Untitled  
(meditation)

This spot is where I like to be,  
outdoors in nature's realm.  
It helps me think, relax, get hold,  
and keeps me at the helm.

The beauty stretched before me  
is a promise, written clear.  
This spot where I so like to be  
will find Him ever near.

Care-giver's Role  
(strength)

Tired to the bone, aching for rest,  
    playing a gallant role,  
    Running from task to task I go,  
lest he see what's deep in my soul.  
    Smiles I give and tender words,  
    yet my face is wearing a mask.  
I feel people think me hard and cold  
    but this role was carefully cast.  
    I'll take the stage and centre-front  
    while others wait in the wings  
And I'll find the strength to do my best  
    whilst God's blessed angel sings.  
Only He knows when the last act comes  
    and the final curtain comes down.  
    Then He will hang a star in the sky  
    and my loved-one will wear a gown -  
    A raiment of beauty, in peace at last  
    and my acting career will be done,  
The mask removed and I will mourn; -  
not cold, just the "part" and I'll have won.

## Just Because

A yellow rose from me to you  
Just because I wanted to.  
Yellow roses have been our theme  
But the prices they charge I never dreamed!  
How have you done it all these years? -  
Christmas, birthdays, anniversaries or tears.  
I give you not a dozen or two  
But a single, yellow rose to say "I love you."

## The White Horse (dreaming?)

I felt I could climb up  
on the snow-capped mountain peaks  
midst a storm-tossed sea  
with caps as white  
as white could be.  
Wind-blown sky rushing by  
with white clouds  
in crashing waves racing through.  
A white horse -  
clear as it could be.  
I wonder -  
Did anyone else see it  
or was it only me?

Untitled  
(breathing space)

Oh, could I but fly away  
just as the birds I see -  
Not too far, just soar on high,  
away from this smothering sea;  
Always watchful, as a mother to her nest  
but a time of quiet to reflect  
And uplift, restore, renew my all  
so my blessings I will always detect.  
Blessings - As I return I know  
are continually coming. And when  
I look at the outlet before me -  
it's the blessing of my pen.

Dawn  
(meditation)

A magical moment, the dawn of a day  
When all of my fears are cast away;  
By Nature I am surely kissed  
With awe - to view the splendour of this -  
This miracle unquestioned day after day  
Is surely proof of God - showing the way.

Untitled  
(trying to understand)

The grass gets greener and longer, too  
Yet I stand helplessly by while the frost devours you.  
The trees are in bud, spring flowers are blooming  
While a blizzard engulfs your whole, precious being.  
'Tis written that all life is ever-renewing;  
It's hard to believe with what I am viewing -  
But believe I must that you'll ever be  
As much alive as the tallest tree.  
You've planted seed and they too, have sown;  
That's the process of life as we all have known.  
God bless you and keep you, my Darling - Adieu -  
You'll be near me forever in everything new.

Untitled  
(feeling lost)

The river made me shiver until I looked to see  
The reflection in the water of a beautiful tree.

Untitled  
(Jesus loves You)

There doesn't seem to be a way  
that I can sit and write  
The way I feel right now, right here -  
the way I feel tonight.  
I'm thankful for the years we've had,  
the time we've spent together  
But saddened as the days grow short  
and you lean towards the heather.  
You soar on high in silver planes  
while I sit and watch you sleep.  
May your journey be a peaceful one  
and may your God you seek.  
His arms are open wide for you,  
He's stretching out His hand  
And when you put your hand in His  
is when your plane will land  
Up above the clouds of wonder,  
how peaceful it must be  
In heaven, just one step beyond  
the beauty that we see.  
Whenever I look at the moon or sun  
or see the sky of blue,  
My Darling, when I look at these -  
I'll be seeing you.

“Ted - oh Ted” (June 15, 1988)

## Memories

(Sad)

Memories can hurt but memories can save.  
It's what I remember and how I behave.  
The good ones, I find, hurt more than the bad  
For they twist at my heart and make me feel sad.  
To the bad ones I've already turned the key  
So they're helpless to harm or undo me.  
So I don't have a mate and I'm travelling alone  
But he showed me the way and I feel at home  
To go where I choose and do what I will  
And I feel him near and close to me still.

## Untitled

(angry, alone, confused, sorry for myself)

It took so many years for me  
to learn to be his wife.  
I never thought how losing him  
would alter my life.  
It's going to take as long, or more,  
to learn to function alone.  
No one to praise me. No one to scold me.  
The house is no longer home.  
The silence screams. My arms ache.  
I buried my heart with him.  
Death robs, it hurts, but I must go on  
so my memories will never grow dim.

Blank  
(angry, sad)

What's happened to the words I feel  
although I've tried and tried;  
What's happened to my poetry  
since my husband died?  
My mind is blank, my eyes are dim,  
the pain is deep within.  
Life goes on - It's so unfair -  
No one mentions him!  
He was a man who lived and laughed  
and helped his fellow man.  
I'd like to know they remember him -  
just do the best they can  
To keep alive the memories  
he left behind - right here;  
Remember the man who touched their lives  
and to me who was so dear.

Need  
(lonely)

Tears spill over and I wonder why,  
when I thought I was doing so well.  
I've so much bottled up in me -  
If someone would listen, I'd tell.  
I cannot eat. I cannot think.  
I cannot understand.  
I'm not doing anything useful  
and that I cannot stand.  
I need to talk. I need a hug -  
There's nobody here but me.  
God grant me understanding, peace,  
and let me somehow see  
That things will not always be like this,  
that somehow, I will awake  
And remember how I used to feel  
when I saw a new dawn break.

Dial  
(sorry for myself)

A phone call really means so much.  
I wish that everyone knew  
If they just picked up and dialed,  
how much good it would do.  
I'd feel I was not isolated  
and a part of life could be  
Because someone cared enough to phone  
and say "hello" to me.

Accomplishing  
(growing)

I've conquered unpleasant frustrations  
and fought the battles of red tape.  
I've done it - a feeling of accomplishment -  
and I thought it was too late  
For me to stand up on my own  
but my husband taught me well  
So now I can put it behind me, forgotten,  
and know all will be well.

## Miracle of Love

In the spring of '87 a yellow rose bush  
he bought for me.  
I pulled it out with heavy heart  
for it had died, as he  
That next spring struggled and clung to life  
with love and concern for me.  
What would I do without him when  
he meant so much to me?  
With each yellow rose he gave his love,  
his heart, his dreams to me.  
Now he was dying - our rose bush was dead;  
How cruel life could be!  
The day we had to say goodbye  
I gave him a yellow rose.  
What will I do without the man  
that only God knows  
Was wise and good and true to me  
and taught me what he knew,  
Things I have stored in my mind and heart,  
that are a comfort, too.  
Yesterday I walked in the garden  
and a miracle I found -  
The end of September and our yellow rose bush,  
six inches above the ground.  
Thank you God for sending Ted's love  
through You to help me see  
The miracle of the yellow rose  
and that love would always be.

## Okay

I think I had to get sick to know  
I was really on my own.  
I planned and know I'll be okay  
and really am not alone.  
I feel a presence and feel at peace;  
God is with me still.  
I begin to think of life, not death  
and know it is His will.  
Through love His strength has carried me through.  
My grieving has been done.  
Ted wouldn't want me to carry it on  
but neither do I. I've won!  
..... I'll be okay.....

I will not complain! I will be thankful,  
be cheerful and joy-filled.  
After all - what's the alternative?

Writing  
(reaching)

Oh, could I but write a poem  
I wouldn't feel quite so alone  
For when my pen and paper meet  
The emptiness flees and my thoughts go deep.  
Not deep down, but high above -  
Thoughts of health and life and love.  
Up above the negative,  
Knowing life is here to live.  
Perfect health is mine from above  
That I may praise and laugh and love.  
When my pen and paper meet  
I relax - feel more complete.

Loneliness  
(a dark day)

Reluctant to take its leave -  
Loneliness.  
Reflection in mirrored walls -  
One.  
The one is me -  
But only half of me.  
Loneliness -  
Heartache.

Wishing  
(light dawns)

Oh, this morning how I wish -  
    an artist, I could be  
    And put down all the colours  
    in the November sky I see.  
With coloured charcoals I would blend  
    the pink through shades of grey  
So dark and threatening grey-tones  
    we would see all fade away.  
As puffs of white amidst cool blue  
    greet the morning sun;  
The pink a promise the artist sees  
    as a good day just begun.

Listen

Silence - broken only by the wind chimes;  
    silence - with so much to be said.  
    Hear me silence while I speak  
    for only you can hear.  
    You - and the wind chimes.

## A Clear Night

It's months since I've seen a midnight sky  
like the one I'm seeing tonight;  
Hundreds of diamonds placed high in the night -  
stars, all sparkling bright.

The pattern is perfect, no one can deny,  
part of God's great plan;  
Light in the darkness that I passed through  
while always He held my hand.

I'm never alone. He's always near.  
I'm never where He is not.  
It's taken me years for me to learn  
this lesson I've been taught.

## Sweet Yesterday

Not a part of my today, nor of my tomorrow;  
You were my yesterday - gone is the sorrow -  
For yesterday was sweet and helped me be strong  
For today, tomorrow and all along.

## Paradise

Awaken your senses and ascend the opalescent arch  
away from the abyss of loneliness.  
Find the ageless, awesome beauty of Nature,  
who never abandons you.  
She is your steadfast repose, softly drawing you  
to Paradise all around you, if you but open your heart.

## Sunset

Pink hues on the horizon  
behind the naked trees  
Make it seem like they are beautiful  
standing there without their leaves.

Whatever is done by God's loving hand  
is done for miraculous reason  
And the awesome beauty spreads and grows  
no matter what the season.

Sun sets and I watch, humbled.  
Dear God - please hear my mortal prayer  
That I may find those words that are worthy  
to paint your creations with care.

My brush is but a pen, Dear Lord,  
my canvas is but a page;  
So I pray what I put down in words  
is likened to that of sage.

## The February Night

My steps were heavy, my feet hard to lift  
as I walked up the street in the dark.  
The streetlights were few and far-between  
as I walked around the park.

I couldn't see beyond the tears  
that somehow had to be free -  
Some trailer homes shed a soft light  
from curtained windows I could see.

I was walking with my loss -  
no one to comfort me;  
Empty, void, unaware of the weather,  
I was only half of me.

Why did this heartache come back tonight -  
Why did the tears blur my sight?  
It seemed that everyone had someone  
on that frosty Friday night.

I've done my best to carry on;  
Would the gnawing gap never leave me?  
Then I lifted my head and saw the stars  
watching over me.

When my lashes were frozen and I was chilled to the bone  
it seemed someone took my hand.  
I made my way back to my home  
and opening the door was grand.

The heat surrounded my body like arms;  
I cried and felt relief.  
The love that comforted me then, would now -  
that really is my belief.

I slipped into bed and lay in the dark  
thinking of his love;  
That I'll never forget my husband, my friend,  
and that has been planned from above.

The pain is less most of the time  
but there always will be a time  
When I remember the greatest gift -  
love - that was his and mine.

“Gold would not buy my treasure-chest of memories.”

## If Only We Could See

When grief and loneliness form dark clouds,  
they're really shielding us -  
Giving us time to cry our pain  
and remember those precious to us.

There'll come a dawn when we'll awake,  
but only when we're ready,  
And then those protective, sheltering clouds  
will move at a pace that's steady.

We'll know the darkness brought healing and rest -  
wisdom from down through the centuries.  
We'll see blue skies again, some day,  
and with them precious memories.

## Walking Alone

It was always so easy to take your hand  
but now it isn't there.  
I walk alone and feel that nobody  
could really even care.

There isn't a someone to talk to  
about the things I do.  
It makes things unimportant  
when I can't share them with you.

When days and nights, for years and years,  
you were there for me,  
It's lonely to have to walk alone;  
I'm only half of me.

## A Special Delivery Message For You

When you've lost your co-pilot -  
flying solo near and far;  
When your engine seems to falter -  
know I'm just beyond the bar.

When clouds are dark and heavy,  
I am winging it above;  
When you fly through the storm,  
trust I'm watching you with love.

When you rise above the mountains,  
I'll be cheering you along;  
When your flight becomes less bumpy,  
I'll be in your heart with song.

I have just been sent ahead  
and we will meet again some day;  
So now, live every rainbow  
that comes along your way.

## Comfort

When your mind is asking “why”  
and your heart is oh-so-heavy;  
Your body aches with sorrow  
and you just weren’t ready.

When you’re least expecting it -  
along comes tomorrow;  
You waken to a brand new day  
and gone is the sorrow.

Although you do not think so now,  
”this, too, shall pass.”  
You’ll know you have good memories,  
without the pain, to last.

Another day to live and learn,  
to love, to dance, to sing.  
Winter has gone, with all the gloom,  
and you will welcome spring.

## Garden of Life

I'd like to give thanks to God for life,  
for the wonder of just being.  
With awe, I think of all it means,  
His gift of life I'm seeing.  
All the stages of life, I see  
are just as Nature's seasons -  
Spring summer, autumn, winter -  
and all have their reasons.  
The sun goes down, the moon comes out,  
the stars show us the way  
And it starts all over, it's never-ending,  
the beginning of a new day.  
When flowers shrivel and fall from their stem  
and the leaves fall off the tree  
I never doubt it's God's plan  
and their beauty, again, I'll see.  
So when a loved-one passes from sight  
I know there is a reason;  
He's gone through a door to another room -  
for him, the end of a season.  
But I do not doubt at my journey's end  
that my loved-one I will see.  
When I pass through the garden of life  
he'll be waiting there for me.

## All I could give him - my love

Thoughts (not rhyming) on caring for my loved-one who was dying of cancer. I guess a combination of all the feelings that led to infant poetry. The man who wrote me beautiful love letters, called me “Brown Eyes”, and his “Sweetie”.

So tired. What’s sleep? Five minutes is heaven. From the makeshift mattress on the floor, I pull myself up the rails of the hospital bed, squeezed into our little room.

Senses clearer - hearing so keen - eyes see the slightest movement or change.

Watching the sun rise gives strength for the day and night ahead. Colours - green - so many shades of green - blossoms silently awakening - birds sing a hushed lullaby.

Smile! Strength I never knew I possessed - feet ran from job to job when before, they could barely walk. Didn’t see myself getting thinner for there was no time to notice. I was so hungry at first and then my hunger was no more and a teaspoon of peanut butter would do me for hours. Tea - Tea - so much tea he wanted - could only take a sip but it was liquid for me.

So hot! The fans did little yet he didn’t complain.

Are the birds ever going to waken? They’ve slept so long! Time - just a method of keeping track of the pills - so many pills. All so long ago and yet like yesterday.

Promise I’d be sitting in the chair beside him whenever he opened his eyes. Five minutes = five fingers he’d hold up when he was awake so I could run to the bathroom, hang the wash, wash and rinse and change the apparatus on the two oxygen tanks and watch the time - change over the tanks (no more than five hours on one).

TIME - I was a prisoner to time and yet time - so precious for him. I could see him faintly smile and hear his raspy whisper “so good” as I bathed and dressed him and combed his silver hair.

People came and went but I didn’t really see them. I was alone. He was alone. We were alone, together. I could think only of what had to be thought of for that hour. I had no thoughts of other people.

He was the only one I could think of, flying in silver planes and I could only sit and watch. He’d fought so hard and been so strong but there wasn’t any of him left. I wanted to yell, “Stretch out your hand. HE is

there for you and your plane will land safely”, but I couldn’t for fear he would turn the other way. I had to be gentle so I crooned familiar hymns quietly, not “saying” anything. He heard. He knew. He is risen. - Joan Adams Burchell

“A rainbow is a promise - gloriously painted on the canvas of the sky. Who could not believe that ‘over’ the rainbow is the Masterpiece, called heaven?”

## My Pen

My pen helped me when my loved-one died.  
Whatever was there, deep-down, inside  
Was scribbled on bits of paper when  
No comfort came but through my pen.  
At the time, I didn't realize  
That God had given me such a prize;  
For as days passed and poems grew  
The heartache left - I found life anew.

## This Private Diary

If this was what I was intended to do  
Then Ted was a part of God's plan, too.  
He had the tough role and was brave as could be;  
Observing and writing was the part for me.  
Oh, what lessons of life and love,  
Of suffering, struggling and looking above;  
Of finally reaching out his hand  
To walk with his Saviour in the Holy land -  
Heaven - at last. He'd searched his life through  
To help me write this book for you.

Okay, it wasn't your husband who left you but someone else close to you and you still wonder why you grieve so much and for so long? *Please know that this is normal!!* Grief isn't the same for everyone because it is *your* grief and everyone handles it differently, but they *do* handle it and you will, too. It is time given to us that we need. Time to find ourselves without that special person in our lives and time to know that life will return to you without you losing the memories of your loved-one in your heart. Good *Memories* are always with us and no one can take them away from us.

This has been *my Private Diary* of my husband's illness, death, and how I felt throughout the entire time. It hasn't been shared with anyone before.

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On the next few pages, I am including a few poems that I wrote for others that I lost or cared about. Perhaps one of these will touch you in some way that will bring a little relief and hope for you and the future. God bless!

## Goodbye to My Friend

Today, the sun rose beautifully -  
a sight for all to see;  
I hope my friend saw it rise  
before God called, "Come to me."

I hope there was an angel there  
and she was not alone  
Before she rose and took her place  
at the foot of Heaven's throne.

I know that now she is free of pain  
and no longer all alone;  
She missed her beloved husband so;  
now he'll welcome her "home".

Each time I see the sun rise now,  
I'll think of the memories  
That build between two friends, with time,  
creating many stories.

If there were apples in the orchard  
or strawberries in the field,  
That's where you'd find my friend and me  
and we'd come home with such a yield.

We'd travel to the city  
just to visit a Mall;  
While she drove, she pointed out  
the birds - she knew them all.

We'd stop to have her special treat  
of coffee, hot and sweet;  
And talk about the things we'd done  
in our gardens, that week.

Her life was full of history  
that I'll remember, too;  
Of how she served her country well  
in Air Force blue.

She knew each and every inch of town  
because she was raised here;  
But she loved to travel around the world  
to places she held dear.

She carried treasures home with her  
and loved to tell the glory -  
What country each had come from -  
there was always a wonderful story.

These stories I'll remember -  
she left a legacy;  
And though she's gone now from my sight,  
she filled my heart with glee.

So now I say "Goodbye" to a friend,  
but never will forget  
The kindness she spread upon the earth;  
now heaven will benefit.

### Dog Heaven

I think 'dog heaven' must surely be  
a place where dogs can run;  
No stake to tie or leash to walk -  
just a place to run.

They'll sleep upon a pillow-cloud  
by the light of a newborn star;  
Food and drink and treats galore  
will greet them near and far.

Angel-dogs will sing to them;  
a canine choir sounds fun,  
But, mostly I think dogs want their heaven  
to be a place to run.

## Remembering Mom and Dad

Rose and Jim Adams

May 28, 1902 - April 16, 1974 ..... July 11, 1901 - April 16, 1978

This sixteenth day of April is  
like a warm summer's day.  
Not long ago was frigid cold;  
spring thoughts seemed far away.

This date, so long ago,  
took my parents one by one;  
And never again did I believe  
this day would bring the sun.

My angel Mom is singing -  
I hear her sweet and clear;  
And Dad is making flowers grow  
in the garden he held dear.

Memories of them will never fade  
and together they must be  
Angels in heaven's garden -  
watching over me.

Mama  
(in loving memory)

She held her head a certain way,  
her hands were graceful, too;  
She had the warmest smile and her eyes  
were brown, not blue.

They sparkled when she smiled  
and I'll never forget the way  
She sang away her troubles  
as she worked throughout the day.

Today would be her birthday  
if she still was here to see;  
Tonight the brightest star you see  
will be Mama smiling at me.

\*\*\*\*\*

On this quiet, April, Easter day most homes are adorned with pure, white  
lillies.

Pink and blue hydrangeas peek out from behind window-curtains.

The azalea forms a beautiful centerpiece.

I, however, can think of only 'one' flower that I would like to see today -  
my Rose - my Mom.

## Memories of Dad

All dads have little habits they do that make them special and dear.  
'I' remember Dad's love for ties - give one and he'd grin ear to ear.

His taste was very conservative but we knew what to do;  
A silk-knit one I chose one year, in his favourite colour of blue.

He couldn't wait to show it off; "My favourite one, alright!  
Not too loud, colour's good, and the material is fine - just right."

But there was something to beat that tie - Can you believe a fishing lure?  
Trout, bass, pickerel or pike, He was a fisherman, for sure.

The thing that I remember best are the fishing tales he told,  
About "the one that got away" - It took his line - how bold!

His arms weren't long enough to show the size of that doggone bass;  
Our roars of laughter made it worse and the fish grew longer fast!

And then there were the hockey games; he listened on radio.  
Those were the days of the big six teams and "The Leafs" were the team  
in "TO".

Baseball, another sport Dad liked - he was true to the Toronto team.  
Horses were another love, but trips to the track were lean.

Dad peeled apples on Sunday mornings for Mom to make her pies;  
Just a little thing, perhaps, but it put sparkle in Mom's Irish eyes.

These are all just a few of the things that remind me of my dad;  
He tended his garden, polished our shoes; he was always happy - not sad.

He expected us to do our best in everything we did;  
He taught us to live by the Golden Rule and we're happy we did as he bid.

Thank you Dad for just being you and sharing your humour and love.  
My memories, all written in my heart, tucked under the wings of a dove.

To Jenny

When you were young you used to run  
and together we would play;  
Now you're content upon your mat,  
to watch me through the day.

You used to hear a pin drop;  
when I whistled you always came;  
Now you cannot hear a thing -  
not even when I call your name.

Your pretty ears have suffered pain  
but you very seldom complain;  
We've walked together through sun and shadow  
and even through the rain.

Although you cannot hear me,  
you listen very well;  
You know when I am talking to you -  
it's so easy to tell.

Your eyes, your tail, your smile, your kiss,  
you use to answer me;  
If I searched the whole world over,  
no dearer friend there'd be.

You never seemed to mind that there were  
just we two;  
I used to worry that I, alone,  
would not be enough for you.

Now, through time, we're a great old pair -  
we communicate just fine;  
If you feel just a little happy -  
the blessings have really been mine.

For the joy and comfort you've given me,  
I thank you, little friend;  
Our angel will always watch over us -  
right to the rainbow's end.

*Please note: I had to say my last goodbye to my dear Jenny on December  
8, 2003. She was 15-1/2.*

*Perhaps, someday, I will be able to write another poem about her. Right  
now - my heart is breaking.*

*Joan*

Barb

Did I listen? Did I hear?  
Did I help to ease her fear?  
So much pain; so brave for so long;  
How could pain make her sound so strong?  
I've lost a friend and pray that she  
Could overlook the weakness and lack in me.  
Miles apart - I couldn't see;  
Phone-wires were always between her and me.  
She gave so much right 'til the end;  
I feel like a twig that just couldn't bend.

Fly Angel - fly! Spread your wings!  
Forget all the painful earthly things.  
I'll see you in each garden flower;  
I'll feel your touch in a summer shower.  
I'll hear you laugh at a puppy's play;  
I'll speak and know you're not far away.  
Fly Angel - fly! You are free at last;  
The love you left will hold me fast.  
When I hear the windchimes sing  
I'll think of you and when it was spring.

Written April 14, 2003  
For my cousin and friend - Barbara -  
(Dec. 10, 1935 - April 14, 2003)

## Hannah's Star

A tiny light shone on earth -  
so bright it reached to heaven.

The angels watched; saw pain move in  
and flew down to earth from heaven.

They saw a tiny girl so sweet -  
her age was only three.

She braved the pain but could not mend  
and her spirit wanted free.

The angels stayed and played with her;  
made sure her dreams were sweet.

“My name is Hannah. What is yours?  
I'm glad that we could meet.”

The angels sang her lullabies;  
in her dreams they dressed her in gold.

Hannah saw her mommy and daddy  
and hoped her story could be told.

But she was so weak when she was awake -  
all she could give was a smile.

A steady vigil her parents kept  
to walk with her that last mile;

And then God sent more angels to earth  
to ease the parents' grief.

They helped them through their worst ordeal  
and promised there'd be relief.

When Hannah was ready to go on her journey,  
all dressed in gold and white,

She smiled as she put her tiny hands in theirs  
and went with them through the light.

“Can I wave to my mommy and daddy now  
and tell them I'm okay?”

Her angels nodded and when Hannah turned -  
a speck from her gown fell away.

The angels said it would shine in the sky  
like a golden star for them

And so the parents saw Hannah's star shine,  
every night, just for them.



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Canadian ISBN 978-0-9783056-5-9

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Walking Through Grief  
(Back Cover)

This has been *my Private Diary* of my husband's illness, death, and how I felt throughout the entire time. It hasn't been shared with anyone before.

If you have lost a friend or loved-one and feel like you are going crazy because you are angry, losing control at the worst times, and feeling very much alone - *please know that this is normal.*

Many times I thought of throwing away *some* of what I wrote just for me and to keep my sanity. Now I have been persuaded to put it out there for you to see. Maybe you won't think you are in such bad shape after all! I wrote about *time* and *peanut butter* and now it seems very shallow. It wasn't!

Whatever you do, however you feel, even if you think it crazy, *write it down!* It is only for your eyes and it will make you feel better.

I had a minister visit me while I was writing all this and he read it and said, "You hold on to this and some day you will know what to do with it. Just don't destroy it."

Slightly embarrassed about some of the things I wrote for me alone, I give you now. If it helps only *one person*, it will have served its purpose.

Joan Adams Burchell

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Canadian ISBN 978-0-9783056-5-9