

September Lament

Labor Day is coming, and the children will soon be back in school (but not ours unless Heaven has school). I hear other parents talking about sending their child to the first day of school and how they cried and how hard it was to "let them go" -- and I hope they never know how hard letting go can be.

I know that some reading this wonder if anyone remembered that this was the year they "should" have been buying a lunchbox and a nap mat and feeling sad over the separation for a few hours and the tangible signs of growing up and away from mom and dad. Oh, how they wish their little one had gotten that chance!

This was the year some of our children would have "flown up" from the Brownies or graduated from Cub Scouts to the "big boys." Some of our children should be buying their class ring -- or maybe that is the last thing they did. Whichever it was for you and no matter where your child was in school, or whether they even got to start, "back to school" is a time when we see children in ads, in stores, and in our minds. Remember, there are others who understand and share your pain. Reach out to one of them.

~ Central Arkansas TCF Chapter

A Season of Many Feelings

Fall is a season of many feelings.
Autumn is here once again
as it comes every year.
And with the leaves
my falling tears.



This time of year is the hardest of all.
My heart is still breaking,
once again it is Fall.
Memories once so vivid
are seeming to fade.
My time spent with you
seems some other age.

This season reminds me
of grief and pain,
but yet teaches hope
and joy once again.

For the trees are still living
beneath their grey bark,
And you my sweet child
are alive in my heart!

~ Cinda Schake, TCF, Butler, PA

OCTOBER MEMORIES

October's here, the air is bright,
The leaves decked out in fancy dress,
The clouds, in shapes of animals
Hang in a sky so blue.



This was "our" time of year, Rene,
Your favorite.
How many times did you come in
Cheeks glowing, eyes sparkling,
Smelling of the leaf piles you jumped through
As a child and after you "grew up"?

How many times did you say
"Just smell, just smell the air, I love it.
Crisp, with a hint of winter coming."

Our time, but now only my time,
Time to dream dreams that won't be,
Time to wish wishes that can't come true,
Time to remember and treasure each day
We had together;
Time for October's memories.

~ Arden Lansing, TCF, Northfield, NJ

The Stream

I went to the river to meditate. The river was wide, clean and flowing rapidly. I picked up a tree limb and broke it into four pieces of approximately equal size, one to represent each member of my family, including my son, who had recently died. As I tossed each piece into midstream, I silently named it as it began to drift.

My 19-year-old daughter's piece drifted off first, but quickly was channeled by a cross wind, and promptly returned to the shore.

My wife's piece started, then drifted past some rocks and eddies, and after traveling fifty yards, also returned to shore.

Mine started slowly, made it past some rocks, whirlpools, and an entanglement of logs, and after traveling 250 yards, it also returned to shore.

But the piece that represented my son drifted directly to the swift mainstream, accelerated, and floated off on pure, clean water to points unknown in the glistening and gleaming light.

~ Ed Kuzela
Atlanta, GA TCF





A Lesson From the Geese

Have you ever wondered why migrating geese fly in V formation? As with most animal behavior, there is a good reason from which we can learn a valuable principle of mutual aid.

* As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an “uplift” for the bird following. By flying in their V formation, the whole flock adds 71% more flying range than if each bird flew alone.

* Whenever a goose falls out of the group formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the “lifting power” of the bird immediately in front.

* When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies at the point position.

* The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

* When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow him down to help and protect him. They stay with him until he is either able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out on their own, with another group, or catch up with the flock.

And so it is with The Compassionate Friends.

The Role Model

I watch with wonderment as you go about your daily task.
I see the determination, the quiet confidence,
and wonder if you were always like that --
Or did your child's death touch you deep inside
and soften your soul?

Did your priorities change? Did your pace slow?
Am I seeing the new you or the old?
I see you laughing and talking with friends
and wonder if you still cry when you are alone,
and remember your child
with death memories to bitter to own.

Or have you traveled to a higher plane,
another phase...beyond the tear and grief
and fears and untold sorrows
that trap me in their maze?

I don't know. I know only that I look to you
and hold on tightly with hope in my heart
that someday I, too, can gather strength
and find my new start.

~TCF, Montgomery, AL

Grief is like a River

My grief is like a river
I have to let it flow,
But I myself determine
Just where the banks will go.

Some days the current takes me
In waves of guilt and pain,
But there are always quiet pools
Where I can rest again.

I crash on rocks of anger
My faith seems faint indeed
But there are other swimmers
Who know that what I need.

Are loving hands to hold me
When the waters are too swift,
And someone kind to listen
When I just seem to drift.

Grief's river is a process
Of relinquishing the past
By swimming in Hope's channels
I'll reach the shore at last.

~ Cynthia Kelley, TCF, Cincinnati, OH



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