

# When You Lose Someone You Love: A Personal Journey Through the Heart of Grief

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## **Sample of Content:**

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## **Content:**

I heard a shotgun blast. I must have been hit because I was down and felt it in my stomach. I was lying on the ground of a parking lot in the dark scared, hurt and alone, not knowing if I would live or die. It seemed so real, even though it was a dream.

This dream, after my father died, helped me understand the shock and physical hurt I was going through. I had never experienced the loss of someone I loved and it hit me in the gut. It was as if a part of me had died. And it had. Especially the part of me who reserved things like "dying" for other families, not mine.

I was alone in the uncharted territory of grief. I wasn't interested in watching television or reading a novel.

Interestingly, I enjoyed playing the piano, as unpracticed as I was. Usually I'd be too busy to sit down and play but now time didn't seem to matter. I remember calling a friend whose husband said she was kayaking and would be spending the night camping on an island. I wondered if I would ever get out there again, back into the world. It was as if I was suspended in an altered state of being.

I couldn't write about my father's death for a long time. To write about something gives me distance it keeps me in my head. As long as I didn't write about my father dying, there was no distance. It was still happening in me. Like in my dream, I needed to stay in my body to feel the loss in my flesh and blood "my bones.

I soon began to receive and experience the incredible healing power of love. It came mysteriously it was an honest outpouring from the people who surrounded me, wrote letters and called. One expression of sympathy I will always remember came from my friend Diana who lost her mother to breast cancer when she was a teenager. Soon after we returned home from Dad's funeral there was a knock at the door. There, Diana stood holding the most beautiful bouquet of flowers: delphiniums, sunflowers and zinnias. She put her hand over her heart and said two words, "My mother." We didn't need to talk. I knew she was telling me about the love that lives on.

Another friend called.

Ann said "I want to take you to lunch. I will never forget when my father died."

It didn't matter that Ann was in her 80s or that she had lost two husbands after long 30-year marriages. It didn't matter how many years had passed since her dad had died. She knew how I was feeling and wanted to share this time with me.

During this time, my tears would come as easily as the memories of Dad. I believe tears are like holy water. They flow from the well of our hearts, where we hold our feelings. I stayed with my sadness. I shared it with others and received great comfort because they too have had sadness.

My mother said she gardened with her grief. Her yard was never more beautiful than the year my father died. This time of grieving, as it gradually left my body, gave me a new way of living it became my traveling companion as I lived more compassionately. I learned that our sadness ennobles us as humans. It means we have loved deeply. It is this love that will never die. I wrote about this in a poem the summer after my Dad died.

MY FATHER

I think I am letting him go.  
It is not that my love is diminished  
or that I miss him less.

It is only that the sun is up  
and there is no milk  
in the refrigerator  
and the bunny got out  
of the cage  
and is eating my red geraniums.

I think I am letting him go.  
But sometimes at night  
before I go to sleep  
I feel the tears  
fill up my eyes  
and run down my cheeks.

I do not think I will ever  
let him go.  
But he is gone.

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Susan Florence is author and illustrator of The Journeys Series, a collection of giftbooks to help us find meaning along the journey of our lives. Two titles, When You Lose Someone You Love and Your Journey will inspire and touch the heart of those who are grieving. Visit <http://www.SusanFlorence.com> to order books and view her art.

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## **About the Author:**

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