

# A Journey Shared

Although undated, these poems were written over approximately 14 years. They are deeply personal, though certainly not works of literary merit.

In the process of honouring and letting go this part of my life's journey, I collected them together from letters and diaries. In doing so, it seemed to me they tell a story – and perhaps it is a story worth sharing.

**To all those who have lived with or loved  
someone suffering from depression**

**To all those bereaved through suicide**

**and**

**To Glenn  
with love always**

## A Journey Shared

You say you are worthless,  
you have nothing to give  
and you can't find a reason  
for existence.

I wish I could give you  
some of my passion for life.

I wish I could open  
a window into your soul  
that would show you  
all the love and warmth  
you keep concealed  
even from yourself.

I can't give you meaning  
or purpose in life -  
but oh, how I wish  
you could find it yourself.

I've no right to tell you  
what to do with your life,  
but I can't be silent  
when you talk of death.

I can't stand aside  
while you waste what you are  
or what you might be.

I have to say "Live!"

I have to try helping you  
find the worth in yourself  
and a reason for living.

Because, my love,  
you are special  
and I care.

You've built walls to protect  
the self you cherish  
and not many see  
the softness within.

Thank you for letting me  
past those barriers;  
thank you for sharing  
that self with me.

I know you'll be there  
if ever I need you,  
a shoulder to cry on  
or a smile to share.

Through laughter and tears  
the warmth between us  
has filled my heart  
and enriched my soul.

## A Journey Shared

Between us is a wall  
we cannot climb.  
You put it up quickly  
take it down  
reluctantly.  
I wait  
sometimes patiently  
sometimes not  
for you to take  
the bricks away.  
There is nothing  
I can do.  
It's your wall.

Sometimes  
I think I see you  
through filmy layers -  
opaque protections  
that keep me distant.  
I catch glimpses of you,  
like moonlight  
shining through  
gossamer cobwebs  
thickly entwined.  
These shields  
you have woven  
are part of you  
and have their own beauty.  
I could not,  
would not break  
their intricacy.  
Yet sometimes,  
when I sense the brightness  
of your moonlight,  
I am wistful  
to see you  
more clearly.

## A Journey Shared

A weekend conference  
and a luxury motel room.  
All creature comforts  
except the most important.  
Reaching out to touch you  
brings nothingness;  
coldness, not warmth.  
Without comfort of touch  
and your body  
I am alone,  
tossing and turning  
in the cavernous bed.  
Eventually I sleep  
fitfully  
in a foetal curl

At night,  
no light,  
no moon,  
no stars,  
no neon signs  
or passing cars.  
Just sky and sea  
in black infinity.  
The only sound  
is the waves at our feet -  
the distant bark of a dog  
makes the silence complete.  
With timelessness  
like a cloak  
around us curled  
hand in hand  
we stand  
at the edge of the world.

## A Journey Shared

Sometimes it is as if  
we are strangers.  
I look at you and wonder  
why we are together.  
We are so different  
you and I.  
The world of my imagining  
is unknown to you,  
you scorn what I feel  
and don't share my visions.  
Between us lies  
an unfathomable chasm.  
We reach across it  
with a tenuous grasp  
that I am scared  
will be easily broken.  
Is it possible we'll build  
a bridge to span it?  
Will you ever see me  
as I really am?

Whatever confusions  
or complications  
created between us,  
maybe because of us,  
there's one thing I'm sure of -  
our love shines through,  
straight and true,  
a ray of light  
and hope.

## A Journey Shared

I look into your eyes  
and see the lights and shadows  
of your soul.  
But sometimes I wonder  
how much I really  
understand.

You say you feel bad  
you didn't give me flowers.  
But don't you realise  
your butterfly kiss  
was a posy,  
your arms around me  
a bouquet  
and when I saw my love  
reflected in your eyes,  
my heart was filled  
with a whole garden  
of roses.

## A Journey Shared

Everything is negative  
you said.  
There's no such thing as positive  
you said;  
some things are just less negative  
than others.  
You said it flatly,  
defiantly,  
almost angrily -  
daring me to disagree.  
I wanted to shout NO!  
To take you,  
shake you,  
make you see it differently.  
Then I sensed  
behind your anger  
and your view of reality  
the overwhelming depth  
of your pain.  
Instead of shouting  
I cried.

No one sees us  
as we really are.  
We both wear masks;  
yours made of the anger  
I'm too scared to express,  
mine of the tears  
you can't shed.  
Perhaps  
if I learn to show anger  
and you learn to cry  
we can both throw away  
our masks.

## A Journey Shared

Passion spent,  
you fall asleep in my arms  
and I watch  
the man in you melt  
into the delicate line of eyelashes,  
the gentle curve of your cheek,  
the softness of your lips  
against my shoulder.  
At this moment  
we both seem so vulnerable,  
even the sprinkling  
of freckles over your nose  
makes my heart ache  
with love  
and tenderness.

When you shut me out  
I used to circle your walls,  
beating against them  
till my heart  
was sore and bruised  
and you felt the need  
to stay longer  
behind your barricades.  
Now I know  
to wait patiently outside  
holding my heart  
like an offering  
and loving you  
until you open your door  
to invite me in again.

## A Journey Shared

I sit here this morning  
in an English garden  
half a world away from you,  
reading all your letters  
once again.  
I ache with longing  
to hold you in my arms  
or trace your face  
with my fingertips.  
But for now  
all I can do  
is hold the memory  
in my heart  
and count the days  
till I come home.

I'm like an addict  
deprived of a fix.  
I have been  
too long  
without you.  
All I can hope for tonight  
is to phone you  
and the telephone looms  
in the corner  
like a temptation.  
Yet I resist,  
though I'm not sure why.  
Perhaps because  
it feels a little foolish  
to want you  
so badly.

## A Journey Shared

Your letter arrived today.  
I held it a moment  
before opening the envelope  
like a child hugs  
a secret joy.  
You may be a world away  
but your voice spoke to me  
from the pages  
and I found myself  
smiling.

Does alcohol  
help you numb the pain  
like oil of cloves  
on an aching tooth?  
Or is it more  
an exploring tongue  
unable to let the ache alone?  
When you drink,  
to me it seems  
you walk the edge  
of a deep well of pain.  
Such delicate balance  
is easily tipped  
and in you fall -  
I am drenched in your anger  
caustic and cruel.  
I know you can't help it  
but I can't live with this  
any more.

## A Journey Shared

I know  
you thought it was over  
and living apart  
seemed like an end.  
But though I can't live with you  
I still love you deeply  
and all it became  
was a new beginning.  
Just another way  
of being  
together.

A Friday night  
sharing simple things;  
shopping together  
or watching a movie  
and talking over  
our working week.  
Yet I wonder,  
as our eyes meet  
and we smile,  
if anyone else  
would notice  
under such ordinary things  
the extraordinary depth  
of our love.

## A Journey Shared

So many years  
of hard issues struggled  
and good times shared.  
Your touch  
still feels electric  
and your smile  
still makes my heart turn over.  
Words can't express  
how much I love you;  
you have part of my soul  
in your keeping.

I wonder  
what you were thinking  
as you smoked your last cigarette  
and had that final drink.  
Were you smiling or sad  
as you turned the key  
and let fumes fill the car  
to carry you away?  
I must live  
with not knowing  
but still  
I wonder.

## A Journey Shared

The man at the Coroners' Court  
asks so many questions.  
*What is the name of the deceased?*  
*The address of the deceased?*  
*Your relationship to the deceased?*  
I want to scream  
"He has a name - USE IT!"  
But on the front of a folder  
is a slip of paper:  
*Condition of body - Partially decomposed.*  
Numb and afraid,  
I answer questions  
while the screaming builds,  
unbearable but unuttered.

Through a window  
in another small room,  
lies a figure under a sheet  
with only the face exposed.  
I'm asked if it's you.  
I want to shout "NO!"  
This thing with bloated belly  
and swollen, black flesh  
is a grotesque gargoyle.  
It must be a cruel distortion  
crafted by a sadistic sculptor -  
it can't be you!  
But I nod my head dumbly  
and am left alone with you.  
Oh, I so want to touch you  
and I hear myself moaning.  
The window glass  
is cold, so cold  
on my forehead and fingertips.

## A Journey Shared

You left a note  
headed "Sue-o-cide",  
the use of my name  
finding me,  
binding me tightly  
in the choice you made.  
It began with accusations  
and ended a love letter.  
Did you really think  
I could be unfaithful?  
Or did anger help you  
find the courage to leave?  
I can never be sure.  
All I know  
is what I want to believe.

Death is so final.  
Since you've gone  
the rain and winds of winter  
have reflected my heart.  
I forgot  
nothing else is dead,  
just sleeping.  
This morning  
when I stepped outside  
it smelt like springtime  
and I cried

## A Journey Shared

People ask me  
am I angry.  
I answer "No!"  
and mean it.  
My bright,  
shining knight,  
you fought your dragons  
so hard for so long.  
How could I be angry  
when you decided  
to stop?

You left instructions.  
Thompson River  
near Brunton's Bridge  
you said -  
so here we are.  
Our campfire plays  
the last song of a tree  
as we talk into the night  
and watch the flames dance.  
Memories and our love for you  
weave through the fabric  
of our conversation  
like threads of gold.  
At midnight,  
mystical pivot  
of yesterday and tomorrow,  
our footsteps echo  
on the small wooden bridge.  
Silently  
in velvet darkness  
we stand watching  
as torchlight, held steady,  
makes your ashes a silver stream  
falling softly to the river below  
and silvery clouds  
drifting on the wind.  
For a moment and an eternity  
the universe stands still  
as earth, air and water  
carry you away.

## A Journey Shared

An impossible man to live with,  
a difficult one to love,  
you sure weren't perfect -  
but neither was I.

It may not have been easy  
but I loved you completely  
and now that you've gone

I miss you so.

I'm out of balance,  
my world's out of orbit  
and emptiness  
gnaws at my soul.

I often dream of you,  
feel your arms around me  
and hear your voice,  
or see your crooked grin  
as you tease me  
with a smile in your eyes.

Then I wake.

For a few heartbeats  
the dream is real,  
until it shatters  
like glass  
and I'm bleeding  
inside  
once more.

## A Journey Shared

I used to think  
heartache  
an imaginary word,  
the fluffy stuff  
of romance novels.  
But now there's a rock,  
sharp and painful,  
in the middle of my chest.  
Sometimes  
it wakes me at night  
or stops me breathing,  
I press hard with my hand  
to ease the pain  
and there's a heavy ache  
where my heart should be.

Last year  
your death  
blew my world apart  
like a nuclear bomb.  
In places  
life has returned,  
but huge swathes of my soul  
are still barren and burning.  
One day will they heal,  
or forever be wasteland?  
Can anyone tell me  
the half-life  
of this pain?

## A Journey Shared

I remember  
the gentleness  
and strength of your hands,  
the tenderness  
and depth of passion we shared.  
I remember your arms around me  
and your body against mine,  
butterfly kisses on my cheek  
or the tip of my nose.  
I remember  
writing messages on your skin  
with one fingertip in the dark  
or rubbing my face softly  
against your shoulder,  
inhaling you  
with every breath I'd take.  
I remember  
all the textures  
of your skin under my fingers,  
I remember the love in your eyes  
and the way your smile  
could still make my heart turn over.  
My senses are filled  
with memories of you  
and I miss you  
with every part of my being.

We don't  
get over grief -  
just learn to weave  
the rest of our lives  
around it.  
At first  
a jagged rock  
with cutting edges  
makes our hearts bleed.  
Then the ocean of time  
rolls and tumbles it  
until smoother,  
smaller,  
and bearable  
it comes to rest -  
a part of us  
forever.