

Pathways

through grief

...memories

I walked a mile with Pleasure
She chatted all the way,
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow,
And ne'er a word said she,
But, oh! The things I learned from her,
When Sorrow walked with me.

—Robert Browning Hamilton

Perhaps they are not stars
But rather openings in heaven
Where the love of our lost ones shines down
To let us know they are happy.

—Eskimo Legend

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*“When someone you love becomes a memory,
the memory becomes a treasure.”*

— Author unknown



Grief Pathway Outlook

Terrain:

Hilly, slow curves,
scenic view ahead

Weather:

Clearing, chance of rain
with some sunshine

Heartache Index:

High

Travel Tips:

- You will never ever forget the one you loved.
- Memories are treasures—good memories, funny memories, and not-so-good memories, but they are a part of your life.
- Don't hesitate to talk about your memories, even if you cry or laugh. Pass the stories on to others in your life.
- Memories of your loved one can bring comfort and gratitude for the time you had with him/her.
- Some choose to revisit old haunts where memories were made; others choose to stay away. Choose what is most healing for you.
- Do not feel guilty for enjoying life—your loved one would want you to enjoy life.
- You may want to write your memories. Writing can be therapeutic.

Some Things Still Remain

We called him “Pappy.” He was grey-haired, tan-skinned, and wrinkled from working in the fields. He had a large tummy, just right for grandchildren to pounce on. He wore old, faded well-worn overalls that were sometimes “hitched up” with baling wire after a suspender broke. He is remembered for “fixing” grandchildren’s bee and wasp stings with tobacco juice.

It was not unusual on a hot day for Pappy to come in from the hot fields in Tennessee and lay on the floor in the kitchen, using the back of a chair that he had turned up-side-down as a diagonal rest for his back while he rested on the cool, hard floor.

Pappy was my granddaddy, a man adored by all his grandchildren. His death was my first up-close experience with death as a child. When he died, I thought my heart would break. I realized that death was permanent—that I would never see him again on this earth.

My cousins and I cried until our eyes were red. The funeral home brought the casket with Pappy in it back to the “home place” for the equivalent of today’s respect calls, and people “sat up” with him until he was taken to the church for the funeral and burial.

Pappy seldom dressed up, and he would not win any prizes for how he looked when he worked around the farm. But to a child, looks meant nothing. What mattered was who Pappy was. The grandchildren liked being around him and found sheer delight in jumping on his soft round tummy. We knew he loved us, and we loved him!

Looking back, I was blessed to have Pappy as my granddaddy. He died at the age of seventy-four of a heart attack while fixing fences. Even though he physically left us that day, he left some valuable gifts behind for our family, three gifts in particular.

First, he left behind the gift of relationships – healthy relationships with his children and grandchildren. He taught us how to trust and how to love. Even though Pappy is no longer with us on earth, our relationship with him will never end.



Pappy also left us the gift of memories, memories of good times with him, and what wonderful memories they are! Fun memories, loving memories! Memories of him sitting in the front yard in a big pile of yellow, red and orange leaves – grandchildren in the leaves around Pappy and a baby on his lap.

The third gift he left us is the gift of lessons-learned. He taught us what a relationship with a grandfather should be like. He taught us how to love, to laugh, to romp. He taught us the lesson of hard work, honesty and integrity. He taught us that outward appearance is not as important as what is inside a person. When he died, we had to learn to grieve, to experience the pain of loss as children, with cousins leaning on cousins. But he also taught us to remember the happy times, to cherish our fun memories.

If you have lost a loved one through death perhaps they too left you these gifts – the gifts of relationship, of memories, and lessons learned. Yes, even though our loved ones leave us and move to the Other Side, *some things still remain.*

J. Dawn Rountree

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“There are things that we do not want to happen but have to accept, things we don’t want to know but have to learn, and people we can’t live without but have to let go.”