

Eulogy for Joan

by Southern_Witch_69

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This Too Shall Pass

Chapter 1 of 1

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Joan

January 20, 1937-November 25, 2003

I just wanted to say a few things today for my grandmother, Joan. For most of us here, this is the hardest day of our lives. We are losing the center of our world. She was our rock. She made us stay together.

For most of us, the first time we came here was just over seven years ago when we buried Nanny, her mother. Mama liked the people here, and she took one look at the peaceful, beautiful cemetery and knew that this is where she wanted her body's final resting place to be. Unfortunately, here we are today respecting her wishes.

I feel she will here in body only though. Her spirit still lives on. Everything we do, no matter where we are, she will be with each of us. In fact, not all that long ago we had a talk about this very day. I told her I couldn't imagine not having her around especially to confide in. She told me, "I'll always be here. Talk to me anyway. I'll always be listening." I honestly believe that, and I plan to do just that. I will still share everything with her.

She will live on through each of us along with our children and through her siblings and their children as well. We will never let the memory of her fade. She is around us in all we see, hear, and feel. Mama was one of the most amazing women that I have ever known. She always accepted everyone no matter who they were. She made anyone feel welcome. She'd talk to anyone be it stranger or friend. That's what I love about her, and that's how I want to be.

Mama was always strong, always willing to do what had to be done to make ends meet, always forgiving no matter what was said or done. And she always bounced back--until now. But she overcame so many things in her life. She was never bitter, never judgmental, and never angry. When things started going wrong with her health, she never gave up. She stayed positive and did what had to be done. She was a very independent woman up until the very end. No matter how much you tried to help her, she'd protest and insist on doing things for herself. Where most people would have given up and let themselves go, she grew stronger, more determined, and thrived. One of the many comforts she had was us--her family. She thrived knowing we were always near. She was so proud of each of us for our many triumphs.

She taught us many things in life, especially about sticking together. Mama wouldn't want us to give up on family even though our centerpiece is gone. If anything, this should bring us closer together and make us appreciate each other more. If we all band together, it will be easier for all of us. All you have to do is look to the person sitting next to you.

That is a person whose life she has touched. They've seen her beautiful smile. They've kissed her adorable cheeks. They've heard her gentle voice. They've made memories with her--some bad, some good, some forgotten, but all cherished. She is in this room right now. Not just right there, but here listening. She is nodding her head

and whispering that she loves us and misses us.

When her mother passed away, she came across a nice poem by an unknown author and saved it. I'd like to read it to you now.

*God saw you getting tired
A cure was not to be.
So he put his arms around you
And whispered, "Come to me."
With tearful eyes we watched you
And saw you pass away.
Although we loved you dearly
We could not make you stay.
A golden heart stopped beating
Hard working hands at rest.
God broke our hearts to prove to us
He only takes the best.*

In closing, I want to read one other poem that I had found amongst her things and remember her enjoying. It was written by Mary E. Frye in 1942 and titled, "Don't Stand at my Grave and Weep." It touched her so much that she clipped it out of the newspaper, and she kept it near. I think there is a message she wants to convey to all of us. Passages were underlined and highlighted as if they meant something special. I know most of you have probably heard this already, but I am going to read it to you anyway.

*Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there, I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow;
I am the diamond glint in the snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain;
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning hush of
Quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry.
I am not there- I did not die.*

And she didn't. She's looking back at me when I look into my young son's eyes. She's the breeze blowing through the wind chimes. She's the hummingbird hovering outside the window. She's the beautiful powder puff plant growing on the lawn. She's the rain that waters the flowers. She's that sad country song playing on the radio that seems to be saying exactly what you feel. She's that whisper that no one else can hear. She's the door that suddenly closes on its own. She is free to be anything she wants to be. And we will never again be alone.

Southern's Notes: When my grandmother died about three years ago, we took her across the state where she'd wanted to be buried. I found out the day of her funeral that I was supposed to give a eulogy for her. The family figured that I'd be best as she was quite close to me, and I had experience with speaking in front of large groups.

I wrote this on the back of the funeral program in only a couple of minutes and read over it a few times before getting up to deliver it. It's not polished at all and is quite rough. I know this. That was the hurried emotion flowing from me, I suppose, but the words were appreciated all the same.

My family says it was quite riveting to hear me talking, watching me gesture to my grandmother, and looking as if I was confident that all would be well again even in such a time of sorrow.

She was a mother to eight children—many who have been in and out of trouble for one reason or another. They are nearly all at odds now most of the time, arguing over money, jewelry, gun collections, antiques, and other items she left behind. I think she'd be very disappointed in them all. Therefore, I snidely say to myself that if my words were so riveting and made so much sense, they should have heeded them, eh?

Both poems listed above were found amongst her personal things. I remember her reading them after cutting them from the newspaper. The first one is indeed unknown, but many people have it posted around the web and have titled it "Come To Me."

The second one "Do Not Stand At My Grave and Weep" is by the woman I mentioned, Mary E. Frye. It was written in 1942 to comfort a friend who'd lost her mother but would be unable to attend the funeral services.

So, again, I just want to say that I am not taking credit for the two poems in italics.