

Catherine Mary McWilliams Myers

About The Author...

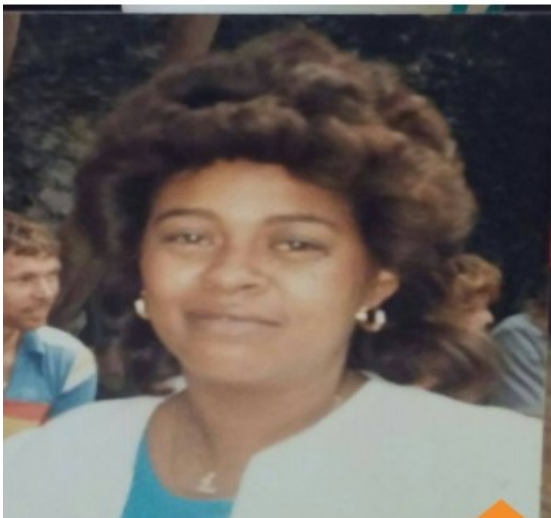
**Born and Raised in New Orleans Louisiana. Now residing
in Vancouver Washington, in which she considers her
Promise Land.**

Mother of 3 Adult Children, and 6 Grandchildren

**Although Catherine is retired, due to disabilities, she
chooses to use this free time, that she never had
during her working years, to uncover her writing
career.**

**Catherine Loves Books, Books, and More Books. The
Spiritual Path is her Passion, and Love is always her
number one motivation.**

THE "FACES" OF MY GRIEF



Introduction

THE "FACES" OF My GRIEF

The "Faces" of Grief have Symptoms. These are the symptoms which express my personal "Faces" of Grief, and how they impacted my life:

- (1) Emotional Grief -My Sister, Sarah (Ann) Bechet
- (2) Mental Grief -My Brother, Joseph (Joe) Washington
- (3) Social Grief -My Cousin, Wihelmina (Mena) Waters Mathieu,
-My Childhood Best Friend, Edith Gary
- (4) Physical Grief -My Dad, Thomas L. Washington Sr.
- (5) Spiritual Grief -My Mom, Annette T. Washington

Grief has Faces: The Faces create pictures, images, they engrave memories and tell stories. These faces, pictures, images, memories, and stories, are the ties that bind us, grip us, and hold us so tightly together, to the people that the faces represent, that the very grief itself, takes on a life of it's on, which literally confines us, traps us, imprisons us, cripples us, until it finally breaks us. What is this sting we call death? We've heard all the stories about the sweet bye and bye; we are told that they are in a better place; that their pain and suffering has come to an end. Yet, still why does the death of a loved one, sting us? Why do we allow the sting of death to rob us? To steal from us, to kill the best parts of us? And to sometimes even, utterly destroy us?

As I behold the faces of just a handful of my loves, and I walk through this Valley of the Shadow of Death, my hope is that I can discover, uncover, and maybe even bring some peace to the so many unanswered questions, that sting of death brings, which causes the unmerciful pain of our grief, at the time of our loved one's death and beyond.

THE "FACES" OF MY GRIEF

"OH DEATH WHERE IS THY STING?"

"OH GRAVE WHERE IS THY VICTORY?"

The Faces of Death: If we live through this life's journey long enough, we will all come to know and understand that in life, sooner or later, we will all, in some way or another, come face-to-face with death. I have decided to use six different faces, which represent six specific individuals whose death, impacted, changed, uprooted and literally pulled the rug from under the comfort zone of my life experience. And don't let anyone fool you, it does not matter, if a loved one's death, is through sickness, disease & suffering, sudden death, an accident or self-inflicted, the impact it has on those they leave behind, is still life altering, tragic and heart breaking. The sting of death is hard. The sting of death is cold. The sting of death is mean. The sting of death is lonely. The sting of death is painful. The sting of death is numbing. The sting of death is cruel. The sting of death is unrelentingly harsh. The sting of death is utter sadness. The sting of death is silent. The sting of death is final. "Yea though I Walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I shall fear no evil, for thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4)

Oh Death, Where is thy Sting? Oh grave, Where is thy Victory?
(1 Corinthians 15:55)

Can there really be any comfort for those left behind, after the loss of a loved one? Where is the sting of death? And why does it cut us so deeply? Is there or can there ever be any victory in the grave?

These are the questions I hope to unravel, as I share my experience through my very real, and very personal, "Faces of Death", with you. Each person represents a loved one, that I lost, as I walked with them, in some way, or fashion, through the valley of the shadow of death. In honor of them, and in respect to their other loved ones, I will not be giving out any personal details about their individual lives. This book is only a small window or view into my life experience, during my personal time of grief and loss.

My hope is that in sharing my story, it my help another soul, as they are walking through their own personal, "Valley of the Shadow of Death."

Dedication

If I took the time to number, all the beautiful souls: "My grandparents, uncles, aunts, great-uncles and great-aunts, cousins, friends, etc. of whom I have lost over my 58 plus years, by this so called mysterious thing, we have come to know as death, it would be far too great a number, to ever complete this book. However, since the death of a close family member or close friend, seems to have the greatest impact on us, at a more personal level, I will use the names of 5 members of my immediate family, and one childhood friend, who were taken from me, over these past several years, by the life-changing, heart-breaking, grief-stricken and devastating hand of death. This book is dedicated to my Dad: Thomas L. Washington Sr.; to my Mom: Annette T. Washington; to my Sister: Sarah Ann Bechet; to my Brother: Joseph G. Washington; to my Cousin: Wihelmina (Mena) Waters Mathieu; and last but certainly not least, to my very first and best childhood friend: Edith Gary. I am writing this book, in memory, and in dedication to each of you, remembering the impact your loss had on me, at the moment of your death, and even until now. No matter how many years, have gone by since your passing, the sense of loss, of emptiness, of grief, and of longing to fill hole that was left open in my heart, where each of you held an important place, role or part, in my life experience. In dedication to my memory of each of you, my love for each of you, and my longing to be reunited with each of you, once again, I now honor each of you, with this book. My intention in writing this book is, that it may somehow comfort the heart of another person, who has to "Walk Through The Valley of The Shadow of Death", because of the loss of one of their loved ones, as well.

Daddy, Momma, Sarah, Joe, Mena, and Edith, continue resting in eternal peace, until we meet again.

Catherine Mary McWilliams Myers

Prefix

Rather young or old, you may have found yourself having to face, the uneasy task of attending a dearly departed loved one's or friend's funeral service, where you may have heard these words, uttered from across the pulpit or funeral director's podium, on several occasions: "Yeah thou I walk through the valley of the Shadow of Death, I shall fear no evil." When King David, wrote these particular words, in The 23rd Psalms, verse 4, of the Holy Bible, I wonder what his intend or motivation was, at the time? He went on to explain, that the reason he would fear no evil, was because The Lord was with him; and that The Lord's Rod and His Staff, would comfort him. As I think back on my own life experience, as I lived through the burden of grieving the loss of a loved one, to be very frank and honest, nothing anyone said, did, read or implied brought me any comfort. My heart was broken and torn apart at it's very core. I was bleeding from the inside out; yet it was a blood that could not be seen, with the physical eyes. It could only be felt; and it was felt from the very depths of my being. Nothing satisfies this grief. Nothing eases this pain. Absolutely nothing gave comfort to, or relieved the agony I felt, because of my grief.

The one think I have found and know to be true about grief is that, there's no way around it. The only way out of grief, is to go through it. To follow the footsteps of King David and just, "walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death". Grief is not a one size fits all process. It's up close and personal. No one can walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, for you. This is a walk, that you have to walk alone. Yes, the Rod and the Staff will be with you, as you walk through this Valley. But the pain, the bitterness, the fear, the hurt, the heartache and heartbreak are yours to carry and bare. There isn't any yard sticks to measure how long your grieving process will take. Some may just need 6 months, some 6 years, some even 20, 30, or 40 years. Yet still some, may never completely rid themselves of the burden of grief. For there are countless stories of how some hearts are so intertwined, that they never let go: they simply grieve themselves to death, following in their loved ones footsteps.

Don't allow anyone to place a barrier, a time limit, or dictate the fashion in which you choose, to allow yourself to grieve. The key here, is to "allow." Now I have learned that there are healthy ways to grieve, and there are unhealthy ways to grieve. My suggestion is to be open enough throughout your grieving process to allow those closest to you, to offer help, and to watch for signs that you may not be aware of, that may indicate that your grief is leading you down an unhealthy path. Listen to your inner guidance, follow your heart, and always choose the way of love and kindness, towards yourself and others. Most of all allow your grief and it's process to be what it needs to be for you. Take it all: The good, the bad and the ugly. And Walk, one step at a time, one day at time, one breath at a time, through your personal "Valley of the Shadow of Death," until you make it through, to your other side of life. Your new normal: For your life will never be the same again; and you will never be the same again. Yet, if you allow it, the best, most truest, loving and dearest parts of you, will remain. If you keep walking, all of the things that really matter in life, will be made brand new in you.

The "Faces" of grief, come wearing many masks, each telling a story, and each representing a certain aspect of the roller coaster ride, called grief. In presenting this book, I'll use different aspects, as the "Face" of my loved one, in my grieving process, which carried me through to the other side of my life experience. Yes, by the Grace, Power and Love of my Creator, and Yes, even though my grief didn't always allow me to see Him, or feel Him, Just as King David said, His Rod and His Staff gave me comfort. Through some of the most darkest times of my life, and walking even through the Shadow of Death itself, I feared no evil, for the Lord was with me then, He's with me now, and He'll remain with me forever, throughout all eternity.

Chapter One: The Face of My Emotional Grief

Sarah Ann Bechet



1) Emotional Grief:

As I walk through the Valley of Shadow of Death, of my emotional grief, I see the Face of my sister, Sarah. The emotional grief that I experienced, during and after the time of her death, seemed to be the greatest of all, to bare for me. I cannot name, every emotion I encountered during the time of the emotional grief I experienced, and still experience because of my sister's death; I still cannot grasp or get to the core of the pain, the complete anger, the outright denial, the total, complete and utter sadness. I wasn't ready. It wasn't supposed to happen this way. The new heart was supposed to make her better. She was supposed to be walking out of the hospital, along with me: made whole and brand new. No Way Heavenly Father, this is unacceptable. We followed all the rules: We prayed! We fasted! We laid hands on the sick! We served You! We paid our Tithe! We believed You! We believed the Word of God! Lord, we worshiped You! I know that at anytime she is going to wake up. She's going to be resurrected. Lord, if you would have been here, my sister would not have died. Yet, even now Lord, whatever you ask of God, He will give You. I can even remember the scene at the grave site, as the doves flew above our heads, and they placed her body in that cement wall, I was still waiting for Her Body to raise her from the dead. My faith in You never wavered, Lord. There is nothing You can not do! You promised Lord. You said that you would never fail me, You would never forsake me. Yet as I groan and moan because of the unexpected, unplanned and unfathomable death of my sister, I ask only one question, "Lord: Where were You? Where were You? Where were You?"

I'm still in that hallway, in my sister's apartment, between her bathroom & hall. As I'm lying her on the floor, because I told her I couldn't hold her up any longer: her body had become so heavy. As I laid her down, the last thing she said to me was, "Cat, I can't feel my legs, I can't feel my legs!" January 18, 2009, even though they revived her heart, she never regained consciousness. And they didn't officially stop trying to bring her back, until the next day, January 19, 2009, at OSHU in Portland Oregon. Her heart doctor, allowed me to be in the room with her: he said they had done all they could do, and she wouldn't want it any other way, so as my sister passed, I held her, I hugged her, I wept and I wailed over her body. On the day that my sister, Sarah Ann Bechet, died, I stopped living...

Catherine Mary McWilliams Myers

Chapter Two: The Face of Mental Grief

Joseph (Joe) Washington



2) Mental Grief:

As I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, of my mental grief, I see the Face of my brother Joe. My mind wonders, it searches, it tries to find a place of rest, a since of peace: Please give me one reason, that in his short 46 years, he was struck down, without notice or warning by a massive heart attack? Was his work as a chef done? Had he fulfilled his life purpose, his hopes and his dreams? Did he teach his two young son's, all that they needed to learn from him? How can I find a place of acceptance and peace, with my young brother's death, when his life seems so unfinished, so cut short and so incomplete? Did you know how much I loved you Joe? Did you really know and understand, that I loved you without judgment, without pretense, completely and unconditionally? Was I everything you needed me to be as a big sister? I know we had our talks about the bible, and the things of God, little brother, But at the moment when you took your very last breath, had you made your peace with God, Joe? I cannot get out of my mind, when it comes to my mental grief for you Joe. I think about your Boys, in which I know you loved with all your heart. Although we have laid your body to rest, Joe, my heart is still open, like an open wound, as it yearns for the answers to these so many questions. I really thought we had more time, Little brother. I thought we had more time, Little brother; I thought we had more time...

Below is the farewell letter I wrote to my brother Joseph (Joe) Washington, at the time of his death:

Farewell Letter To My Brother, "Joe"

Joseph Washington, as I sit on my couch, knowing that I should be sleeping, because I plan on leaving for the airport around 5:00am, yet so much heaviness has filled my heart, that although my eyes are heavy, sleep will not come. I have so many unanswered questions, so many thoughts, so much wondering, concerning your untimely, unexpected, totally shocking, soul-numbing, and sudden death. **Joseph Washington**, do you know how much I truly loved you? Did you know how very proud I was, of all that you managed to accomplish? In spite of the many times, you would open a new business: cooking/chef, catering, night clubs, **Nettie's Kitchen**, The last

Food Express business you opened in Houston Texas, and finally, The Luxe. You never stopped trying; you never gave up on your dreams, no matter how many times, you got knocked down, no matter how many times, the door of success was slammed in your face. You always, always, always, got back up again. You never gave up. You held your head up high, until your final end. The end that not one of us: Your wife and Sons, Your brothers and sisters, And all your other family and friends, saw coming.

And now, even though, the final hours are closing in on me, I know in my heart of hearts, that when I get off that plane tomorrow, and accompany our brothers and sisters, as we visit that funeral home, to view your body: this night-mare, that I have been trying to wake myself up from, since I got that call on Tuesday, when our brother Paul told me that you had a massive heart attack; then about 30 minutes later, as I waited in agony, while they had me on speaker phone: I learned the horrifying news, that you were pronounced dead at 5:03pm. My beautiful brother Joe, with those beautiful dimples, that I always loved, and that beautiful bright smile, that could light up any room, do you realized that, at that moment, I felt my heart sink within me. My stomach became tied up in knots; My breath became shallow, My soul wailed, for you, and My mind search for the reason why Lord, why?

Joseph Washington, Do you know how much Your Big sister loves you? Did I get the chance to tell you, how very very proud, that I am of you? Did you know, that you know, that you know, that your life mattered, to each and every one of us, you have left behind? If not, I tell you now My Brother, that you are indeed, loved without measure, and I am so very proud and honored to call you my Brother. Although you are now absent in the body, you will live forever in My Heart, in the hearts of your Sons, And the hearts of all of those who love you, and hold you dear....Rest In Eternal Peace, my beautiful Little Brother, in the knowledge that You are totally, completely,

**and unconditionally loved....Sincerely, Your Big sister: Catherine Mary McWilliams
Myers...**

Chapter Three: The 1st Face of My Social Grief

Wihelmina (Mena) Waters Mathieu



3) The 1st Face of My Social Grief:

As I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death of my Social grief, there are two Faces that I see: The 1st Face is My Cousin, Wilhelmina (Mena) Waters Mathieu. And the 2nd Face is my Childhood best friend, Edith Gary.

The Face of "Mena "My Me": As I'm writing this book, Mena, for the first time since you left me, I'm sitting here listening to the song you would sing to me, as we sat and talked, while hanging out at your brother, Bernard Water's bar. As the tears are pouring from my face, the lyrics to this song, are penetrating my heart; right down throughout the depths of my being. I feel your presence here with me, "My Me". The song was remastered by Whitney Houston and Toni Braxton, in the year 2000: ("Count On Me." "Count on me through thick and then, a friendship that will never end; when you are weak I will be strong, helping you to carry on. Call on me, I will be there...don't be afraid. Please believe me when I say: count on, count on, count on...You can count on me." "I can see it's hurting you, I can feel your pain; it's hard to see the sunshine, through the rain, oh. I know sometimes it seems as if, it's much harder than it really is; but you'll get through it, just don't give in.") Mena, Mena, Mena...these words represent your heart, to me and how much you loved me, so unconditionally. You got me, Mena, you saw my tears, when no one else could. You felt my pain. You got me, even sometimes, when I didn't even get myself. Even now beyond the grave, your heart is reaching out to me, as you're here in spirit singing this song with me, I can feel all the pain, the anger, the loneliness and isolation, that I held within, as it's now being released. I can feel your love for me, from beyond the grave, helping to set me free. Mena, I was so angry at you...because you left me; you left me without giving me a chance to say goodbye; you left me without giving me a chance to make peace, to hold you, to whisper back to you, to tell you how much your being a part of my life, meant to me. That your life mattered to me. That although most of our lives, we lived in states miles apart, there was absolutely nothing, that could separate us, or distance us from the love we felt in are hearts. We are "ONE" Heart Mena. When you died, Cousin, it felt like, you took the best parts of me with you. You were my mirror, my truth, "My Me." Thank you Mena, for coming to visit, me, for reminding me about our song, for letting me know, feel, and now understand, that the best parts of what we shared, will forever occupy the most deeply held and treasured parts

of my heart. Continue resting in eternal peace, my cousin, my friend,
"My Me", until we meet again...Catherine Mary McWilliams Myers

3) The 2nd Face of My Social Grief

Edith Gary



As I continue walking through the Valley of Shadow of Death of my social grief, beholding the Face of Edith. All I can think of, is the fact that you were my first. Edith, you were my very first friend. I can still remember that day, I was sitting in front my childhood home on Avon Park Blvd, and as you were walking by with your dog, Ringo, on the leash, you stopped to say hello. You actually talked to me. I was a shy, introverted 12 year old girl, and had never had a friend of my own, outside of my family members, so this was a big deal. I don't even remember what we talked about, but from that day forth, you made it a point to come walk by everyday, and before I knew it, we were inseparable. We became known as Edith and Cat or Cat and Edith. You know those people who are together so much, that you no longer say their names separately. You gave us the nick names: "Laverne and Shirley. You said that you were Laverne, because you were the mature flirty type, and I was Shirley because I was the neat freak snobby type. All my family knew and accepted you, and all your family knew and accepted me. Out all the years I spent going to Mississippi for the summer, I can't believe I let you talk me into taking a walk in the woods, and we got lost! It took hours for us to find our way back to Nannie's house. It didn't matter that you were at least 4 years older than me, Edith, I think our levels of maturity made up for it, by meeting each other half way. Your being a little older than me, was a plus, for me, because you taught me so much: You shared your version of the birds and the bees with me, on what happened to my body, when I got my period, on how it feels to get that first kiss from a boy. Edith, you were my friend and guide through my walk from childhood, puberty, and adulthood; I got a taste of what motherhood would be like, after your first born son, Patrick was conceived. We walked and talked throughout your pregnancy, and then after Patrick was born, I watched as you loved and adored him. I even got the harsh taste of what it feels like, to have to lay a mother to rest, when you lost your dear sweet mother. You were my first, Edith Gary. My first friend in life, my first in all those life experiences as we make our transitions from childhood to adulthood. I can even remember when we finally had our very first fight. But thanks to our friend Jeanne Murthil Ali, it didn't last long, because she brought us back together.

I can't say the word friend, without thinking of and missing you Edith Gary; and I cannot hear the Marvin Gaye, "Let's Get It On" Song, without smiling, as I recall you singing it, all day, everyday, off key, over and over again...Lol. I Love you my first and best friend, Edith Gary. Thank you for saying hello to me, that first day, and remaining my friend for life.

Continue resting in eternal peace, until I join you in Heaven, to sing "Let's Get It On", with you...Catherine Mary McWilliams Myers

Chapter four: The Face of My Physical Grief

Thomas L. Washington Sr.



Daddy & Uncle Joseph (Bubba) Ross



My Grandmother Ariska (Pie) Germain, Daddy & Momma

(4) Physical Grief

As I walk through the Shadow of the Valley of Death, of my physical grief, I see the Face of my Dad, Thomas L. Washington Sr. Daddy, I'm having chest pains, panic attacks, sleep issues, aches, pain and exhaustion, throughout my entire body. Daddy I'm weak, restless, I'm crying & sighing, and I have feelings of emptiness that I just can't escape. It's been 28 years, since you had that massive heart attack, and said your final goodbye, yet the physical pain of the grief of losing you, is felt throughout my body, even after all these years, and it's tearing my life apart. Daddy, you were the mender and protector of my broken heart; standing in your strength, I felt invincible, I believed that I could do anything and I felt no fear. You always covered me Daddy, under the shadow of your wings; No matter what life threw my way, You would tell me not to worry, because Jesus would make everything okay. Even when life would knock me down, and cause me to cry or frown, you were always there Daddy, to pick me up and turn it all around. If I grew tired and weary Daddy, you were my place of comfort and rest. You gave me your unconditional love, your total acceptance, and the kind of father's devotion, which made up for all my emptiness. When you went to sleep Daddy, you took a huge piece of me; you left me with this open wound, that only the eyes of a real Father, can see. Now that your gone Daddy, who will be there for me? Now that your gone Daddy, who will set me free? Now that your gone Daddy, who will comfort me? Who can I run to, when I feel battered and abused? Who can I run to, when I am broken and misused? Who can I run to, when I am so confused? Daddy who can I run to, if not you?

Thomas L. Washington Sr. You are everything that a daughter can ask for, in a Daddy. There is no replacing you. So I'll carry the torch of my burning heart's love for you, until I run into your arms in eternity. Catherine Mary McWilliams Myers, saying goodnight for now, Daddy...See you in Heaven.

Chapter Five: The Face of My Spiritual Grief

Annette T. Washington



6) Spiritual Grief

As I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, of my spiritual grief, I see the Face of my Momma, Annette T. Washington. My dearest Momma, bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. How can I ever escape the yearning of my heart, and the aching of my soul, when you are everything Momma, and everything is you? Even when I look in the mirror, Momma, it's your face that I see looking back at me. Your reflection. Your eyes looking deep within the depths of my being. It is your still small voice, that calms my soul as I toss and turn, as I search, as I yearn for answers to the questions that trouble my soul. Oh Momma, why did you have to say goodbye? Momma, Why did you have to leave so soon? On Christmas Day, 1993, late afternoon, the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus, became my day of gloom and doom. Christmas was your favorite holiday, even though we were grown and had left the nest, you still hung all our stockings near the tree. It took me at least 10 years Momma, before I could even consider putting up another Christmas tree. Your death caused me to question everything my life ever stood for. And I still question it: Is there really a true purpose for this journey we call our life? Will my faith in God? in Healing? in the Christian Faith ever be fully restored again? Will I ever be able to pray without a shadow of doubt again? Is there really a reason for living? Or is it all as King Samuel said: "Vanity and Vexation of Spirit?" You taught me how to pray, Momma; how to anoint our heads with oil, and bless the home with holy water. You gave me the scriptures I needed, for the battles of life and of my heart. I know your here in spirit Momma, and that your never separate from my heart, yet what happens when I need to hold you Momma, and feel the beating of your tender heart? Though I love your visits Momma, each time you come to me in my dreams, it doesn't replace having you here with me, where the warmth of your hug, the gentleness of your touch and your reassuring smile, can be embraced, felt, and seen.

Annette Theresa Washington, it was so very hard to let go, and to say my final goodbye to you on Christmas Night, 1993; and as I'm writing this closing chapter in memory of you, 25 years later, it's still so very hard to say goodbye. So instead of goodbye Momma, I'll just say, farewell for now, continue resting in eternal peace, and I'll see you in my dreams...I Love You now and forever Momma.

Catherine Mary McWilliams Myers

Chapter Six: The Faces of Grief's End...







Mena (My Me)

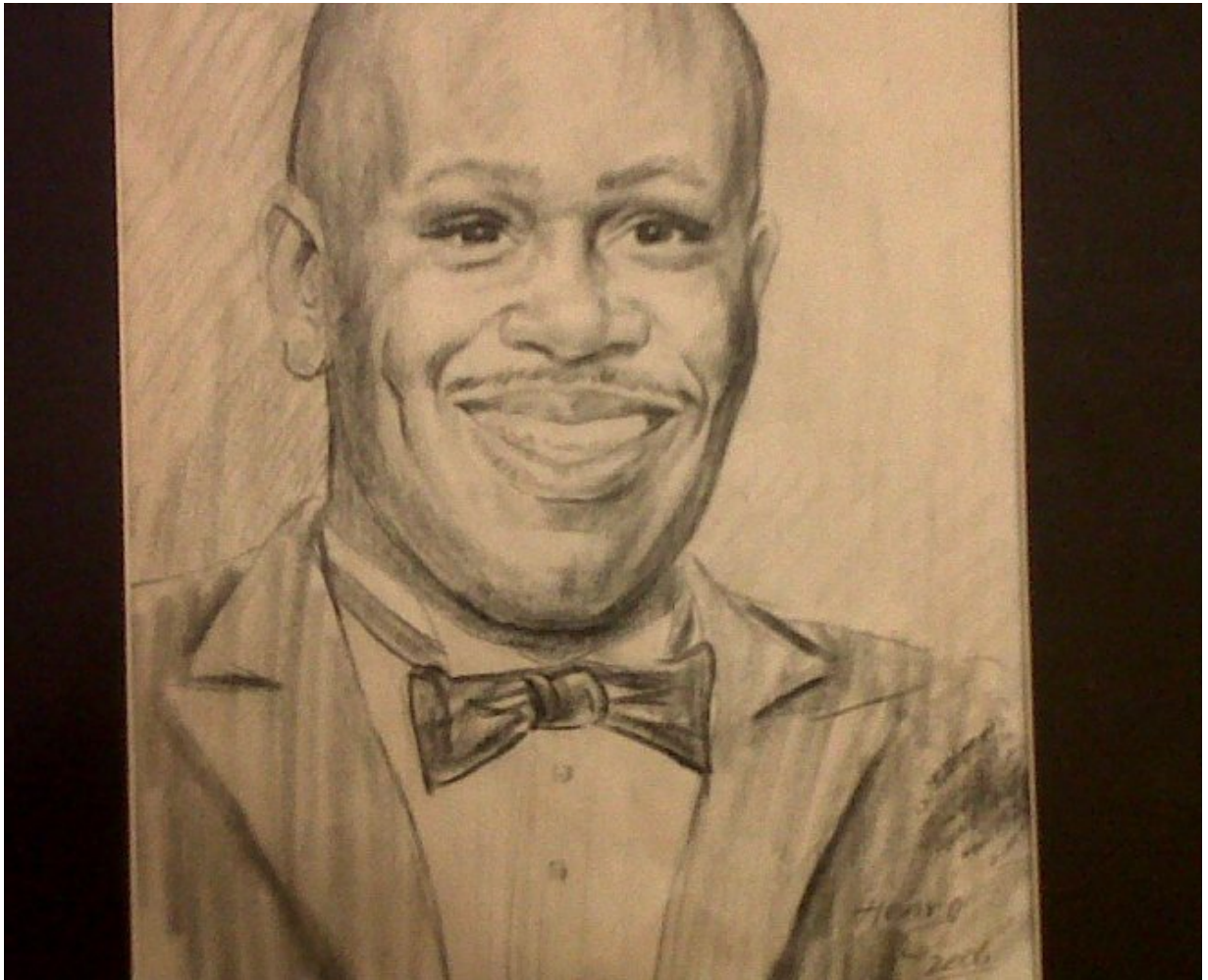


Count on Me...





My Brother Joe and his Sons



Chapter Seven: The "Faces" of My Grief's End...

As I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, of the Face's of Grief's ending chapter, as I sit here and Ponder: I ask the final questions, "Does the pain, agony and suffering we feel, as we carry our burden of grief, ever end?" "Will the sting of death ever release us or set us free?" "Could victory, ever be found in the grave?"

The bible tells us that when a person dies, the spirit is separated from the body, which marks the end of their physical existence. To be absent in body, is to be present with the Lord. First Corinthians, Chapters 51-58: (Verse 51) says, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. (Verse 52) In a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (Verse 53) For this corruptible must put on in corruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (Verse 54) So when this corruption shall have put on in-corruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall it be brought to pass the saying, that is written, "Death has been swallowed up in victory. (Verse 55) Oh death where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory? (Verse 56) The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. (Verse 57) But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Verse 58) Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, as you know that your labor is not in vain.

I chose to share the above scripture, to assist me in coming to the final ending of my Walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, as I behold the Faces of each of the loved ones, this book represents, because in order to aid me, assist me, and carry me through my time of grief, this was the hope, I held in my heart of heart. And on a more personal level, I have had the pleasure and honor to visit with in my dreams, to hear the whispers in my ears; to smell the scent, of my loved one's and feel their presence, of each of the individuals, I have presented in this book, from one time or another.

Yes, the love, the oneness, and the intertwined, ties that bind our hearts, together with those we love, forever, allowed my loved ones, my "Faces of Grief, to reach out to me, even from beyond the grave. My sister, came and sat with me, she talked to me, she was healed, happy and whole. She reminded me of the work I needed to complete, so that I can one day too, move on. My Mom and Dad visit me all the time, and especially when I need to feel their presence the most. My brother Joe, came when I was dealing with a sickness of my heart also, just a few months ago. Edith comes to hang out, every time Marvin Gaye's song, "Let's Get it On" play's on the radio. And My Mena, just dropped by yesterday, to help me to release my grief for her, to remind of her song to me, to allow me to once again feel her love for me, as we sang the song together. The first time my sister came to me, I was in so much pain, I was so stuck, I was so angry, at God, at life, at myself, and at her sickness. And after her visit, as we sat on a bench in a park, with our Mom, standing over us, I heard the voice of the Holy Spirit, say so clearly, "There is no death Catherine, there is only, life."

So as the ending of this little book, which represents the Faces of Grief, for me. I leave you with the same gift, that my Sister, my Brother, my Daddy, my Mother, my Cousin, my Friend, and My Comforter the Holy Spirit, gave me: Yes, the sting of death does loosen it's grip. It's power weakens, the utter sadness ceases to be. Will you ever stop misses them? No, probably not, but you can take comfort in knowing, that our life is not in vain. And if you choose to, you can open up your heart to allow your loved ones, to hang out with you, as they visit you in your dreams.

And last but certainly not least, take comfort in knowing that there is absolutely no death, there is only life. You and your loved ones will indeed embrace again. And yes, the victory in the grave, is to know; and to understand that death is only a passage way, a tunnel, a portal, we pass through, after we empty the shell called our bodies, to set our souls and spirits free, as we begin again traveling our spiritual journeys, called life.

So at the End of The Faces of Grief, there is only:

The Beginning...

Catherine Mary McWilliams Myers