

treetops



stories, poems, drawings and letters from children who have lost someone they loved

TREETOPS is the Child Bereavement Group of the Corrymeela Community

Tracey's
Dog

Stephanie's
Dad

Nicki's
Granda

Bernard's
Brother

MUM

Karen's
Gran

Oh NO
it's not true!

Em's
Mum

Claire's
sister

Jessica's
Grandad

by Keisey



FREE TEDDY...
SEE ABOVE !!

You can have YOUR own story, poem,
drawing or letter published in Treetops!
Tell us about the very special person
in your life who died... and help other
children understand how you feel...
Just send it to The Editor...

Corrymeela Community

8 Upper Crescent
Belfast BT7 1NT

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e-mail: info@bereavedchild.org
<http://www.bereavedchild.org>

issue
no





From THE Editor

Hello everyone,

- Thank you for your letters, drawings, poems and questions. Your contributions make the Treetops Magazine.
- A big thank you to Kelsey (who lives in Leicester) for providing the picture for our cover page. This picture was drawn by Kelsey when she was nine, following the death of her mother.
- Remember..... we love to hear from you so please send us your stories, problems and drawings

Best wishes to all of you,

Carol

(The Editor)

P.S. A special word of thanks to Belfast Cathedral Christmas Sit-Out, St.Patrick's Church Jordanstown, Belfast High School, and Carrickfergus Grammar School for their generous contributions towards publication of this magazine



APPEAL TO READERS!

We need donations for our next issue so if you would like to help, please send cheque (payable to Treetops/Corrymeela) to the Editor at the address below.

8 Upper Crescent, Belfast BT7 1NT

When my dog got sent away

When I was one my Mum got a dog. We named it Ben. One day my brother Paul took it out for a walk. When Ben came back we found that he had cut his foot on some glass and his foot wouldn't stop bleeding. The vet sent him to a farm and he died. And it left a great big gap in my life.

I also had a cat named Billy at the same time but he died as well and that left me very sad because I grew to love him and care for him and I cried for three days in a row.

Tracey Toney

Age 9

Cherry Blossom Time

My sad memory is the death of my grandmother. She was a lovely warm person, who was always there for me. I feel guilty that I never told her I loved her. She was always so supportive and one I could talk to about anything. I remember thinking how terrible I was at the lunch after the funeral, that everyone was so happy and talking about other things. I thought they should have been sad and only talking about Nana. I learnt a lot from her and I go on to be strong like her.

She died in April when the cherry blossoms were in full bloom. For a long time each year when the cherry blossoms came round I was sad but now I'm happy because I know she's happy. I still wish I had told her I loved her.

Karen - Belfast



Happy and Sad days

On happy days I like to play outside
On sad days I like doing not a thing
I like being happy but not sad
Because I don't like crying
I'm sad because I miss Daddy

Stephanie Devlin

Age 7

Armagh

My name is Em and I have 3 sisters and a wee brother. My Dad is still alive and my Mum died when I was 10 years old. This is my poem for her.

Memories

Grieve not for me with sorrowing tears
Think not of death with harmful fears
Though you think me dead
Every tear you shed touches and tortures me
Yet when you sing, delight, my soul is lifted
to the light

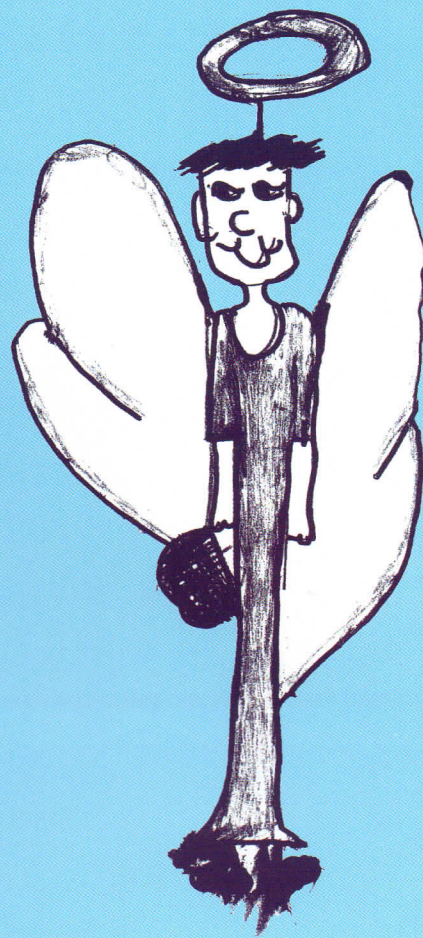
Em, Age 13, Belfast

GRANDA

George, that was his name
Remembering him always brings a tear
Always glad to see me
Never too busy to play
Doing nothing but say jokes all day long.
He was a very funny man!
A little angel he is now with his wings
and harp. I can just see him now!

*PS, when Christmas comes, go give
your Nanny and Granda a kiss and hug*

Nicki McMaster, Age 11, Belfast



My Grandad

My Grandad was my best friend. He had so many stories of his life to tell you that you could listen to them for hours. He was a lot of fun to be with, he played all sorts of different games with me. From the outside he looked like a normal grandad, but inside, there was a heat of gold. If you ever knew my Grandad, William Waud, you'd know he was a great friend to have. But now he shall forever be an angel gliding through heaven.

Jessica Tonks
Pontefract

(written when Jessica was 10)

Do not stand at my grave and weep

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 glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,
I am the gentle morning rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the uplifting rush
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.

Read by David Kossoff in his BBC Radio 4 appeal for The Compassionate Friends on 27th January 1991. It is believed to be the burial prayer of the Makah Tribe of North American Indians. There was a very large response to these lines, and they were then read again on *That's Life!* The response was enormous.

He was my hero

It happened a long time ago when I was a boy of eight and my brother was sixteen. Paddy was everything a big brother could be. He was my best friend, in fact, he was my hero.

It was 50 years ago and the month was March. My sister Marie and my brother Gerald were still living at home. My family had just moved into a new house. Exciting for me, no doubt, yet stressful for the adults. I remember my father, sobbing and saying that with the distraction of moving he had not noticed how frail Paddy had become, until it was too late.

Paddy became ill and his health deteriorated over the next three months and my mother nursed him at home. One day the doctor brought a Consultant to see Paddy. After the examination he went downstairs with my parents. Paddy asked me to listen at the door and come and tell him what I had heard. I crept downstairs, listened at the door and heard the consultant say 'I'm so sorry. Three months ago I could have operated. There is nothing I can do now'.

After a short while I went back upstairs and told Paddy I could not hear what was being said.

On the 23rd June my sister woke me early and told

me that Paddy had been taken to heaven during the night. She told me to be brave and took me by the hand to see Paddy. When I kissed him I was startled to find him so cold. I cried in disbelief, I felt sick. I could not understand why he could not speak to me. I am crying now as I write this all these years later.

Later that day, a relative took me to the seaside. During the next two days I frequently tip-toed into Paddy's room to be with him, cry for him and myself, and to wish that surely this was only a bad dream. For years afterwards I would close my eyes at night and hope and pray that when I woke up in the morning I would discover that the whole thing was just a bad dream.

When the funeral took place I began to feel that the pain would never go away. Time, of course, does ease the pain and yet the memories are always so clear.

Some years later, I got my wish when I was allowed to have Paddy's bedroom for my own. The special smell of that room I can vividly experience in my mind even today.

I have always longed for the pleasure of being with 'my hero' again. God grant that some day it will be so.

Bernard Woods, Dublin.

My sister Joanne

My big sister Joanne was 18 when she took her own life. I was 15 and my brother Jack was 13. Joanne tried to kill herself three times in the last year of her life. On the fourth attempt she succeeded.

It is just over two years now since she died and I have not yet got used to her death. I have not got over it' ... whatever that means. I think of her all the time. She is always with me, whatever I do or wherever I go. Sometimes I am angry with her for what she did and sometimes I am angry with myself for not saving her and other times I am angry with Mum and Dad and with God.

It is hard to go out with friends and giggle about boys and be silly when I am still hurting so much. My friends don't understand: they think I should have recovered by now. I hate them for not

understanding!

No, I don't really. I just wish I could be like them.

As for school and exams, it all just seems so pointless most of the time. I feel I have a huge stone in my heart and a heavy coat on my back.

Will I ever come out of this dark, sad place?

Please think of me and if prayers work, please say one for me.

Claire. (Lisburn) 17

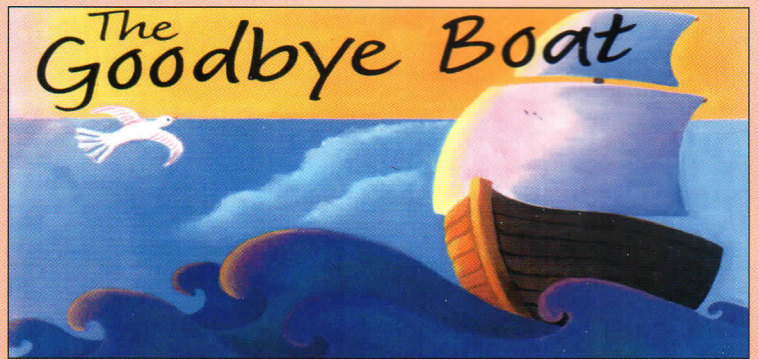


Book Review

'Charlotte's Web' by E. B. White

This book can be bought in many different formats including a beautifully illustrated story book which would be suitable for very young children. There is a soft back version with no illustrations, suitable for children and young people to read themselves. Charlotte's Web is also available as a video.

This book tells the tale of a pig named Wilbur and his relationship with a little girl called Fern, and a wonderful spider called Charlotte who saves him from the usual fate of nice little fat pigs. However, in being alive himself, Wilbur learns what it is to lose one of the closest people to him. This seemed like the end of the world..... Wilbur cried himself to sleep. He also learned how to live without her in his life.



'The Goodbye Boat' by Mary Joslin,
illustrated by Claire St. Louise Little. Published by Lion. £4.99

This book looks at happy times spent with family and friends and how sad, difficult and lonely it is when you have to say goodbye to one of them for ever. It also gives us the happy message that the sadness that comes with losing someone will ease away eventually. It opens up the possibility that death is not the end of our journey. The text is very simple and the illustrations are beautiful. It is a lovely book, which could be read together or alone.

Problem Page



You have shared a few of your worries and questions that maybe all of you would like an answer to. Don't be afraid to ask- we may just be of some help. Here is one of the worries you've told us about.

Q. My Dad died last year. Is it OK to make a Father's Day card for him this year?

A. I am sorry to hear that your Dad died last year. I think it is perfectly OK for you to make a Father's Day card for him. Making the card will help you to remember how special he is to you, now and always.

If your class makes cards at school tell your teacher that you would like to make one too to remember your Dad. If your class doesn't make cards, you could ask your Mum to help with the materials you need to make the card.

I hope Father's Day will bring you happy memories of your Dad. It is OK to feel sad and happy at the same time.

ACTIVITY PAGE

My box of memories

Take a box and decorate it any way you want that will help you to remember the person who has died. You could put on their picture or their name and make it as colourful as you want.

The idea behind this box of memories is that this special box can be filled with things to help you remember_____. There could be pens and paper so that you could write down and draw about all the good times and things you shared together.

There could be a special photo album for you to put in some special photos of _____.

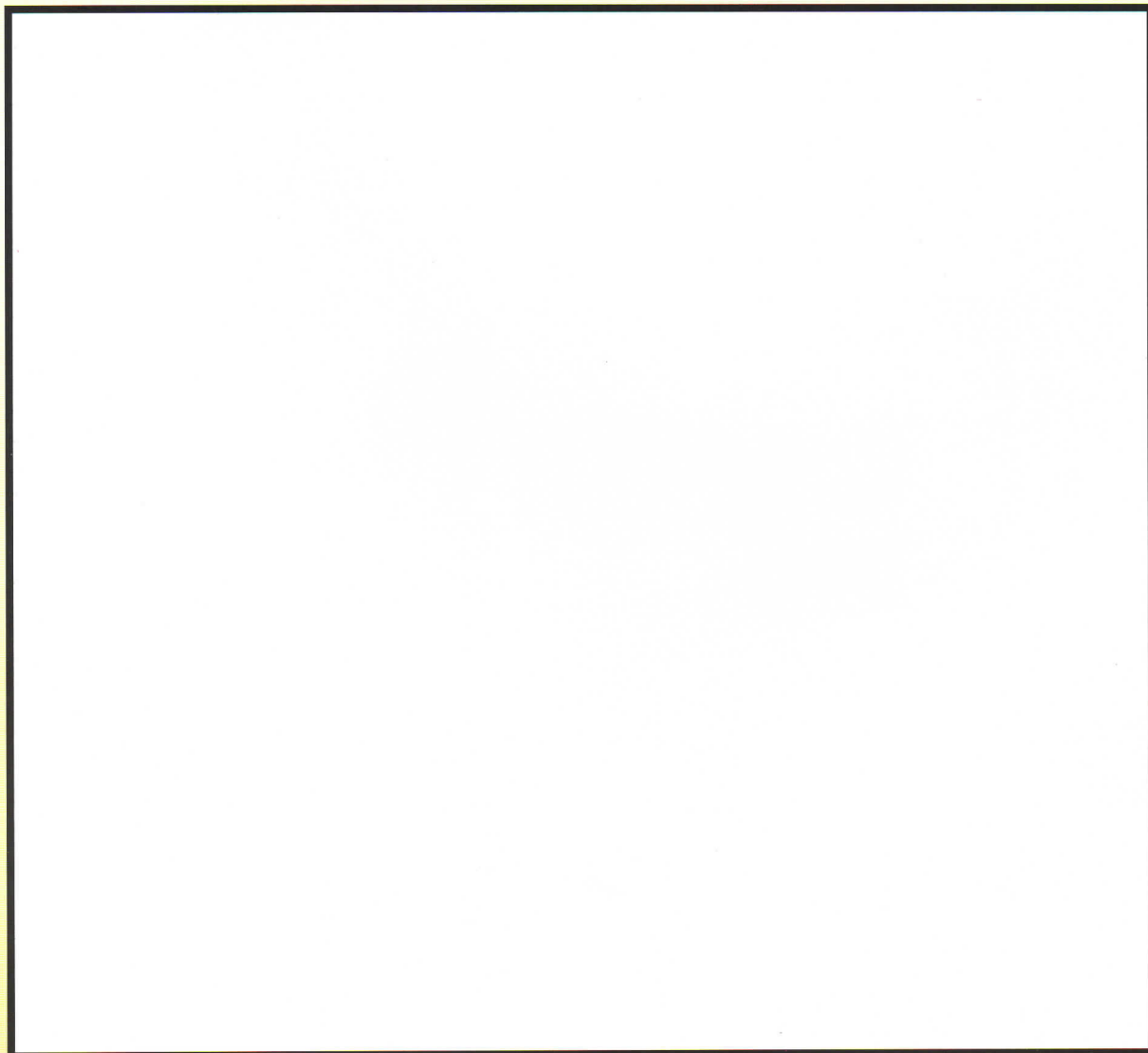
There could be a copy of the special service of thanksgiving that was held to remember them, along with some tissues so that you know it is okay to be sad and to cry when you remember, but to know too, that is is okay to remember them with a smile!

There could be a special prayer, reading or story for the sad times too.

There is lots of space to fill this box with things that will help you to remember your very special person in the weeks, months and years ahead.

What would you put in a memory box?

You could write it down or draw it in the space below.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the student to draw or write their ideas for a memory box.

The

BACKPAGE

'Treetops' is a support programme for small groups of children who have experienced a sudden death in the family. It provides the opportunity to meet and share with other children who have had a similar experience. We use art, drama, puppets, games, songs and stories during our time together.

'Treetops' groups are for children between 8 and 12 years old. Parents are asked to come too and meet separately. Groups meet for six consecutive weeks.

If you think you would like to attend one of our groups or just find out more, please send for our leaflet and application form to 'Treetops', Corrymeela House, 8 Upper Crescent, Belfast BT7 1NT

'I wish I had told her I loved her'

'I hope she knows that she is still special to me and always will be'

Everybody thinks I'm back to normal, but I'M NOT, NOT, NOT

'Can't I visit Daddy just for half an hour?'

'I want to go to Heaven too'

'Can life EVER be the same again?'

'Why does it hurt so much?'

The subscription is £3.00 for 3 issues