



Offering support and understanding to bereaved parents of pregnancy and infant loss

The Story of the Firefly

by Lynn I.

the firefly does not live everywhere
but she lived in my hopes
the firefly does not live for long
but one summer she lived in my dreams
the firefly lights up the night
and one season she lit up my face with a smile
when the firefly beautifully took wing
she lifted my heart up and up

as winter approaches
and my firefly memory seems to fade
i can choose to believe in
cousin dragonfly's transformation:
may my wish for a baby come true!

Sweet Esme

by Cheryl M.

Time stopped for me
That winter day
You came into this world
Too early, sweet Esme.
My belly so full
Of your kicks and squirms.
The loss, the emptiness
So profound it burns.
Hopes, plans and dreams
Filled my heart.
No path, I'm on a journey
Into the dark.
Yet through these travels
I have found
My feet to be on
Firmer ground.
Each day, each moment,
Each breath I treasure.
Through different ways
Life I now measure.
Wisdom, compassion, clarity
And peace
Have come to me with
My grief.
When I close my eyes and
Quiet my mind,
It is you, sweet Esme,
That I find.

What is Brief Encounters?

Brief Encounters is a non-profit, non-sectarian support group for parents whose babies have died before, during, or after birth. At informal, mutually supportive meetings and through our monthly newsletter and Web site, bereaved parents and their families share their stories, discuss issues that arise from pregnancy and infant loss, and remember their children. Through reading, talking and listening, we learn what grief is—and how, through understanding and caring, we heal.

Baby Love

Submitted by Jourdan C.

*Written by her grandmother upon the loss of
Bella Tina in February 2009*

Dear Jesus,
Brush this tear from my brow,
I weep in sorrow for my stillborn child,
My heart yearns to have known her as a living soul,
A longing for her to breathe the life that I will never know,
By the peaceful look upon her face,
I feel you holding her in your arms embrace,
No love is greater than you can give,
In my thoughts I will remember it's with you she lives,
Clear my soul of this empty space,
Provide me with great inspiration on it's place,
Her memory I will cherish throughout my life,
As a treasure to comfort me in times of strife,
Though I may never completely understand,
Heaven has received this child at your command,
I know heaven awaits for me too one day,
Let your purpose of my life radiate with your promises,
I pray,
While you keep this tiny infant in your loving hands.

The End

by Rabindranath Tagore

It is time for me to go, mother; I am going.

When in the paling darkness of the lonely dawn you stretch out your arms for your baby in the bed, I shall say, "Baby is not there!"—mother, I am going.

I shall become a delicate draught of air and caress you; and I shall be ripples in the water when you bathe, and kiss you and kiss you again.

In the gusty night when the rain patters on the leaves you will hear my whisper in your bed, and my laughter will flash with the lightning through the open window into your room.

If you lie awake, thinking of your baby till late into the night, I shall sing to you from the stars, "Sleep mother, sleep."

On the straying moonbeams I shall steal over your bed, and lie upon your bosom while you sleep.

I shall become a dream, and through the little opening of your eyelids I shall slip into the depths of your sleep; and when you wake up and look round startled, like a twinkling firefly I shall flit out into the darkness.

When, on the great festival of puja, the neighbours' children come and play about the house, I shall melt into the music of the flute and throb in your heart all day.

Dear auntie will come with puja-presents and will ask, "Where is our baby, sister? Mother, you will tell her softly, "He is in the pupils of my eyes, he is in my body and in my soul."

No Lullabies for Esme

by Cheryl M.

No first steps, no smiles	No painting, no crayons
No first school day.	No books to be read
There will be no	No wonder and joy at
Lullabies for Esme.	The first word said.
No fevers, no colic	No graduations, no career
No scraped knees.	No wedding day.
No endless reminders	There will be no
To say please.	Lullabies for Esme.
No hugs, no kisses	We lost a lifetime
No late-night cuddles.	Of laughter and tears.
No rainy day walks	We lost a world
Jumping in puddles.	Of hopes and fears.
No birthdays, no Easter	All of the things we'll
No Christmas Day.	Never remember
There will be no	Because you left us
Lullabies for Esme.	That terrible December.
No tantrums, no tears	Only emptiness, despair,
No broken toys.	Skies of gray.
No endless arguments	There will be no
About boys.	Lullabies for Esme.

Resources

Movies That Bereaved Parents May Choose to Avoid

We have compiled a list of movies that bereaved parents and families may choose to avoid due to potentially upsetting subject matter relating to pregnancy loss or the death of a child. If you have additions to this list, please send them to the editor at brief_encounters_news@yahoo.com.

1408 (2007)	Joy Luck Club, The (1993)
Accidental Tourist, The (1988)	Jude (1996)
Agnes of God (1985)	Junebug (2005)
AI: Artificial Intelligence (2001)	Juno (2007)
Alien 3 (1992)	Kingdom of Heaven (2005)
Alien 4 (1997)	Knocked Up (2007)
Almost Romeo (2005)	March of the Penguins (2005)
Astro Boy (2009)	Matador, The (2006)
Astronaut's Wife, The (1999)	Message in a Bottle (1999)
Baby Mama (2008)	Moonlight Mile (2002)
Beloved (1998)	Music Within (2007)
Blood Diamond (2006)	My Girl (1991)
Bridge to Terabithia (2007)	Mystic River (2003)
Butterfly Effect, The (2004)	Pan's Labyrinth (2006)
Candy (2006)	Paradise (1991)
Children of Men (2006)	Pay it Forward (2000)
Cider House Rules, The (1999)	Perfume: The Story of a Murderer (2006)
City Hall (1996)	Quigley Down Under (1990)
Constant Gardener, The (2005)	Ray (2004)
Crash (2005)	Reservation Road (2007)
Cry in the Dark, A (1988)	Saving Private Ryan (1998)
Dark, The (2005)	Sex and Lucia (2002)
Deep End of the Ocean (1999)	She's Having a Baby (1988)
Devil's Advocate, The (1997)	Sixth Sense, The (1999)
Door in the Floor, The (2004)	Sleepy Hollow (1999)
Eastern Promises (2007)	Slingblade (1996)
Elizabeth (1998)	Smilla's Sense of Snow (1997)
Frida (2002)	Sophie's Choice (1982)
Godsend (2004)	Sweet Hereafter, The (1997)
Gone Baby Gone (2007)	Syriana (2005)
Hand That Rocks the Cradle (1992)	Tess (1980)
High Fidelity (2000)	Then She Found Me (2008)
Hours, The (2002)	Up (2009)
I. Robot (2004)	Walk the Line (2005)
Immediate Family (1989)	Whale Rider (2003)
Immortal Beloved (1994)	What Dreams May Come (1998)
In the Bedroom (2001)	Waitress (2007)
Ironweed (1987)	World According to Garp, The (1982)

Books That Bereaved Parents May Choose to Avoid

Our movie list has been well-received and we hope it is useful to you. We'd like to start a list of books that may include content and/or storylines that bereaved parents may find disturbing. Please send book titles along with author and year of publication to the editor at: brief_encounters_news@yahoo.com.

Westside Loss Group: New Location for February
The Westside Brief Encounters group will be meeting on Monday, February 22 (*the fourth Monday*), at Fire Station #60, 8585 NW Johnson St, Beaverton. Please e-mail Caroline (cfalcone@mail.com) or Talya (talyamcnassar@gmail.com) if you have any questions. We are trying a new location to see how it works. Future meetings will still be held on the third Monday of the month. Check next month's newsletter to confirm the location. We look forward to seeing you in group. The group has been attended by newly bereaved parents as well as parents who are years into their grief journey. It is usually an intimate group with parents asking questions of one another, acknowledging where they are today and feeling validated. If you attend the Brief Encounters group at the Peace House and are looking for more connection between meetings, please join us. We would love to provide more support for you. Talya (*Rebecca 2007*) and Caroline (*Cyrus 2007*)

Counselor Referrals

Not all counselors are familiar with the issues that parents face after the death of their baby. If you feel like you would like to talk with a counselor, listed below are the names of persons Brief Encounters highly recommends:

- * Jillian Romm RN, LCSW, (503) 226-6002
- * Brynna Sibilla, LCSW, (503) 289-1101
- * Gaby Donnell LCSW, (503) 287-5683
- * Britta Dinsmore, LCSW, (503) 913-4791
- * Jennifer Stock, (503) 242-1558
- * The Dougy Center (for siblings), (503) 775-5683

Remembrance Jewelry

Carla's Angels (carlasangels.com) creates customized angel pins for bereaved parents.

Elena's Inspiration: The Shining Light Fund (shininglightfund.org), provides customized birthstone Mother's bracelets, free of charge, to moms who have suffered the loss of a child.

Miscarriage and Infant Loss Jewelry (labelledame.com/miscarriage-infant-loss.html). Charms, bracelets and other jewelry to memorialize babies lost at any stage of pregnancy, as well as support and sympathy cards.

Miscarriage Memories (miscarriagememories.com) offers a charm based upon the early pregnancy ultrasound image in tribute to child lost to miscarriage.

Support Between Meetings

Do you need to talk but don't want to wait until the next group meeting? Here are some friends who are willing to talk—or just listen. You may be looking to connect with someone who has experienced similar circumstances in his or her loss(es.) These volunteers welcome your contact by phone or e-mail. Please put "Brief Encounters" in the message line of your e-mail so that our volunteers will be sure to read your message. If you are interested in being listed as a support person, or wish to have your name removed, please contact the editor.

Nancy (bump7911@comcast.net or 503-666-1998) had a miscarriage at 11.5 weeks (8/99) and delivered a full term son, Nicolas (9/13/00), who died 2 months and 8 days later (11/21/00). Nicolas had severe brain damage due to complications during labor. Nancy and Don have one living son, Alex (1994).

Dominique (503-281-6970 or ddallmayr@yahoo.com) adopted a son after a full term stillbirth.

Karin (kersgrim@msn.com) lost her son, stillborn at full term without explanation (9/94), experienced two miscarriages, and a pregnancy interruption of a son, at 23 weeks, who had Trisomy 18. Karen has two living children.

Shannon (adamshannon75@comcast.net) lost her daughter, Heather Renee, stillborn due to an intrauterine infection and premature birth. She has experienced a successful subsequent pregnancy.

Rachel (503-287-2628) has had 3 early miscarriages and lost twins at 21.5 weeks due to premature labor in January 2004. She has 2 living children.

Elizabeth (503-648-1458 or odekirk_hash@yahoo.com) lost a child at 6.5 months gestation after trying to conceive for 7 years and using IVF. She has since adopted a girl.

Gayle (503-661-0764) had a son who was stillborn after a ruptured cord during labor at 34 weeks, lost a son at 17 weeks, and experienced four early pregnancy losses. She has two living children, a son ('96) and a daughter ('01).

Ken (503-761-3816, 503-516-2761 cell) had a son, Mitchell, who died from heart failure ('00). He has two living sons, Mason and Marshall.

Terri (ststrauss@comcast.net) lost her son, stillborn without explanation at 36 weeks. She has three living children (Delanie 3/99 and Genna & Cara 5/02).

Sarah (scellwood@yahoo.com) lost her daughter, Audrey, stillborn at 38.5 weeks in January 2008 due to an umbilical cord incident. She has one living daughter.

Joanie (miniquilter79@hotmail.com) had a daughter, Melissa Catherine, who died of SIDS at 6 weeks of age. She has 3 living children.

Maura (cioeta@comcast.net) lost her son, stillborn at full term without explanation (6/96). She has two healthy children (Anthony, 1/98) and (Annamarie, 4/01). Due to serious high blood pressure at the end of her last pregnancy, which caused a stressful delivery, she plans to have no more children.

Charlotte (503-513-5448) had a son who died at one month of a heart defect. She has also experienced four early pregnancy losses, infertility issues, and a successful subsequent pregnancy.

Carol (carolyork@verizon.net) experienced a miscarriage (7/96) and the loss of a son, stillborn due to a cord accident (3/00). She has two living children (9/97 and 6/01).

Shannon (djzela@yahoo.com) lost her daughter, Dorothy Raine (6/1/07), full term (39 weeks) during labor due to an umbilical cord incident. She and her husband have a son, born 11/08.

Brief Encounters Meetings

Our support group meetings are a safe place to talk about your child, your loss and your grief. You are welcome to share, or just listen. A facilitator guides the meeting. For more information or directions, please call (503) 699-8006.

Parents of Infant Loss and Pregnancy Loss, Including Early Pregnancy Loss

We ask that children not attend these meetings. Thank you.

Meets the second Monday of each month, 7:00 pm

Portland: Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Ave.

Meets the third Monday of each month, 7:00 pm

Note: February 2010, meets the 4th Monday (2/22).

Location: Fire Station #60, 8585 NW Johnson St, Beaverton.

Parents of Pregnancy Interruption Due to Medical Reasons

We ask that children not attend these meetings. Thank you.

Meets the fourth Thursday of each month, 7:00 pm

Portland: Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Ave.

Parents of Subsequent Pregnancies and Adoptions & Parents Trying to Conceive

Meets the fourth Monday of each month, 7:00 pm

Portland: Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Ave.

Fertility & Adoption Support Group

We ask that children not attend these meetings. Thank you.

This group is exclusively for women who are trying to conceive their first, second or more child. Women who have not experienced a loss are also welcome. This group offers a friendly and relaxed atmosphere where you can have a sense of not being alone and receive encouragement, have a chance to express what the experience is like, share what we have learned about fertility and ourselves, and receive positive support. RSVP to Anne at (503) 570-3498 or annehend@aol.com, or Carol at (503) 280-0238 or carol@riverhealing.com.

Meets the first Tuesday of each month, 7:00 pm

Portland: Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Ave.

Brief Encounters

Metanoia Peace Community

United Methodist Church

2116 NE 18th Ave.

Portland, OR 97212

Message Line: Support, Questions

(503) 699-8006 (Spanish line: 503-419-6299)

Web site

briefencounters.org

Mailing List: Add or Drop, or Address Changes

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