

BRIDGES TO HEAVEN



True Stories of Loved Ones
on the Other Side

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***TRUE STORIES OF LOVED ONES ON
THE OTHER SIDE***

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Dream Job

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Preface:

Grief pushes you into the deep ocean of your soul's wisdom; it breaks your heart wide open.

In a dream...

I'm standing on a beach surrounded by a vast expanse of dark sand as far as I can see. Gulls are squawking in the distance. I'm looking into my father's watery blue eyes. He's animated and young, explaining something to me with more passion than I ever saw in the last years of his life. His brother, my beloved Uncle Pete, who died soon after my dad, is standing beside us, laughing.

We're enjoying the vivid openness of the sand and sky and sharing stories, when behind them in the distance, I see a huge tidal wave rolling along the sand toward us—maybe a hundred feet high and towering ominously over the flat landscape. We turn and see another powerful wave rolling directly toward us from the opposite direction. We're standing between these two oncoming waves, and in an instant, we realize there's nothing we can do.

I grab their hands. “How will we remember?” I ask, staring into their eyes. “How will we find each other again?”

“Don’t worry,” answers my Uncle Pete. “We always find each other.”

He shouts something else, but I can’t hear his words through the sound of the crashing waves. I wake up gasping for breath—still feeling their strong hands wrapped around mine—longing for that moment again, hearing their voices in my head, unable to get back to sleep.

Do we always find each other again? Isn’t that endless longing the tyranny of grief? Or is it simply our limited perspective on time and space? Aren’t we longing for the divine realms, where everything and everyone is luminous and connected—and aching to return to a home we can’t quite remember?

When our loved ones step into the other realms, they never fully leave us. We abandon them—by not believing they’re still with us. We stop listening. Our pain blocks them out.

Of course, we’re angry that our loved ones left us alone when we needed them. And we’re angry with the doctor who didn’t diagnose the cancer or the drunk driver on the road that night. But mostly, we’re angry with ourselves because we might have prevented it if only we had...

Yes, there’s plenty to be angry about in the physical world and life is unfair—until you realize it’s all on purpose. This tragic event is only a brief blip in your soul’s journey. Grief is in your life today to help you. It’s your divine reveal—pushing you to remember who you really are and what you came to do.

There's no teacher as powerful as Divine Mother Grief—the spiritual master of pain and enlightenment. If you've chosen Mother Grief as your teacher, you're clearly a powerful old soul who came here to do great work and to help raise the consciousness of humanity. You're here to be a beacon of light for others. And yes, of course you'll make your living from these gifts and find the love you crave. It's all waiting for you to take a step in a new direction.

Let me take you on a journey to the divine. I'll unfold your wings and help you remember how to fly. We'll soar into the vast ocean of the higher realms. We'll leave your pain behind.

Then you'll remember that you came from a world of grace and light and will return to it soon enough—and that this earth-bound life is your brief dream. You'll see your departed ones dancing in the ethers and soaring through your house like children at play.

This part here—this physical world—is the hard part. But you came here on purpose to educate yourself, expand your boundaries, and emerge brilliant and powerful. You're not a victim—no matter how tragic your story.

When you're stuck in your grief, your departed loved one sees you wrapped in a grey cloud of negative energy and longs to take away your pain. Your grief keeps your loved ones from communicating with you. It becomes a wall they can't break through.

Those wasted days of feeling not good enough, strong enough, smart enough, or saying, "I don't care" are when we disappoint our higher selves and push away our departed.

When you once again open your heart and trust your intuition, you'll hear your departed speaking. You'll embrace your spirituality and help others. You'll walk away from the bitterness that damages your soul and separates you from love.

Mother Grief will teach you ultimately that your life must have meaning and purpose or there's no reason to be here, and only you hold the key to finding that purpose. This book reveals your soul's mission and illuminates your next steps. But you have to take the first step...

If you seek only to stop the pain, your pain increases exponentially. Addictions and distractions pull you off course and make your journey harder. When you trust your higher self instead, you become a beacon of light for the world. And this is why you came here.

This painful moment is your spiritual reawakening—provided courtesy of your higher self. It's your moment of grace. There's only one solution now—fulfill your soul's mission and become the light being you came here to be. Here and now, you get to choose. Everything you need is here. All is forgiven. And you—YOU are divine. And this is your moment.

Introduction: When Your Loved One Dies

If you're grieving today, know that your departed tries to ease your pain. Be still and listen...

I'm standing in front of an audience of 200 or more people—teaching a weekend workshop to help them see their true work, their souls' mission. A woman raises her hand, and I catch a brief glimpse of a man standing beside her, wearing a baseball cap pulled down low over his eyes. She tells me her husband died recently and left her very little money. She hasn't worked in twenty years—raising their three kids and helping her husband manage the paperwork for his business. Now she's lost without her husband and her husband's income. Can I help her?

As she tells me her sad story, I see that her spirit is luminous and glowing. **I quickly calculate her birth path and see that she's a master soul on the path of the sacred number 11—here to inspire and heal others.** She has great work yet to do. I see her counseling people and teaching workshops in the future. Clearly, this grief she's experiencing is meant to fuel her reinvention.

The man beside her nods and sends me the message: “She's got more gifts than I ever had. It's time for her to believe in herself. Tell her to be a therapist. It's why she's still there. It's her turn. There's money for her.”

I tell her this information and explain that this work is her soul's mission and she'll be great at it. She says it's funny because she has dreamt of going back to school to

study psychology—the only thing she’s really interested in. But how could she afford it? The man nods again. “The money is there,” he says.

When I give her this message, she argues that there’s no money. She repeats her sad story, and I can tell she’s not ready to let the story go or give it a new ending. I move on and continue teaching the workshop, often aware of the presence of the man with the baseball cap. During a break, I close my eyes and speak directly to him: “She needs your guidance to find a way to finance school. Where is the money? You have to tell her directly.”

At the end of the two-day workshop, the woman approaches me. “I had a dream last night,” she says. “My husband told me there was another insurance policy. **He was always so disorganized—putting papers everywhere. But now I think** I know where I’ll find it when I’m home. I may be able to go back to school after all. We’ll see.” She’s smiling radiantly as she tells me this. It’s the beginning of her new story.

Another day while preparing to work with a client, I see two lovely gentlemen sitting in front of me during my meditation. “Tell her she’s the gifted one, not us,” they say, chuckling with each other. “Tell her she has the gift of storytelling and must use it. She can write and tell her own story in a documentary. She’s so beautiful and talented, but she doesn’t see her own gifts,” says the older one.

I call my client and begin the session, sharing my vision. She’s spent years promoting the work of her husband and his brother—both successful artists and both departed. Clearly, they want her to focus on her own gifts now. She’s a writer and it’s time for her own story to be told. After our session, it takes awhile for her to change

directions, release the focus on her departed loved ones and their gifts, and refocus on her own path. But eventually she does, and her great work unfolds beautifully.

Hours of conversations with spirits and sharing those conversations with clients have shown me beyond any doubt that our departed loved ones try hard to get us to listen to them. They try repeatedly to help us see a bigger vision of who we are and what we're here to do—even if this isn't how they behaved while they were here. Crossing over changes everything...

A woman looking very tired approaches me in the long line to get her book signed. Her girlfriend is at her side—with her arm wrapped tightly around the exhausted woman's waist. The girlfriend tells me that this woman just lost her young son to cancer. She's not doing well, says the friend. "Can you see her child's spirit?" she asks.

Yes, I sense him. He's a bright, dancing sprite beside her, silly and giggling—pulling on her arm. But she's defeated and heavy of heart and can't feel it. I sense she may have a drug numbing her, a drug given by a kind doctor meaning to help. But the drug (probably prescribed for depression) prevents her from feeling her beautiful boy dancing beside her; instead, she only feels a light breeze against her skin and dismisses it.

How can I help her see him? I tell her that he's fine and happy and dances beside her and wants her to be happy. I ask her to close her eyes with me for a moment and feel his energy. We hold hands in silence. I can feel her son's energy acting up—jumping around us. He says, "Mom, I'm here. I'm fine." She smiles at me briefly and there are tears in her eyes. "I think I can feel him," she says. "But I've never believed in an afterlife..."

I explain that this grief is her moment of spiritual reawakening. I tell her to sit in quiet meditation every morning and ask to feel her child's presence. I tell her to speak to him directly during her meditation and write down any thoughts or images that come to her. If she does this, I explain, it will bring her own spirit back to life. She'll know beyond any doubt that her boy is happy and well. She tells me she'll do it.

Because of her heavy heart, I pray she'll make the effort. A huge part of her doesn't really believe her little boy lives on—even as he tugs at her sleeve. She has spent most of her life dismissing her higher self and intuition, and being cynical. She's in a deep spiritual crisis now. Her departed son is fine—shining in the light like a little Buddha beside her—wanting so desperately for Mom to feel better. But Mom must do the work of reawakening to her higher self.

It's *her* soul that's sleeping, not her little boy's. It's time for her to remember who she is and why she's here. Her son's departure is meant to inspire this spiritual reawakening. This is the soul mate agreement she made with him long before this lifetime began. As she languishes in pain, she misses the point, misunderstands the agreement, and makes her journey more difficult.

I tell her to email me about her progress. A year later, I hear from her. She says that after months of languishing in grief, she began to meditate. She tells me it has been miraculous—that she *can* hear her son's voice when she sits and quiets her mind. And this experience, she says, has launched her life in a new and hopeful direction.

We are the ones who die when we grieve our loved ones. The departed pray for our pain to go away, for us to realize that it's all on purpose, and that we can join them as soon as we fulfill our mission here, and help ease the pain of others.

The voices of my departed are an endless song in my head. They move my hands across the keyboard and fill my nights with dreams. I'm their child left behind whom they watch with great concern and extraordinary love—holding back when they long to help, staying quiet when I take a wrong turn, letting me learn my lessons like a child learns to walk by falling down and getting back up again.

From the moment I met Paul under the white-hot streetlight, silver halo wrapped around his head, eyes ripped from a vivid ocean blue sky—I knew I belonged with him. How gracefully he saw me, stroking my hair to find perfection in every flaw, seeing beauty in every crease. He laid his hands upon my soul and loved me.

We shared such joy in our escapades: the long hikes to climb ridiculous peaks, the God talks, the movies that made us laugh and cry. With his dreams wrapped inside my heart, I saw our future unfold. This love would be a resting place for me—somewhere I felt safe from a world where my gifts pushed me too far to the left of normal. I needed his arms around me to dig in—to create our white picket fence life. Together we would find a way to make this realm our own, do our good work and thrive. He made me happy every day.

Did I know he would die soon? I'm intuitive. Why didn't I see it?

It came to me in so many ways so that I would be prepared. Yet being the hardheaded child I was, I fought against each divine reveal: the look on the technician's face the day they scanned Paul's liver, how that film was lost and never found again, the misdiagnosis that made no sense. On our first hospital stay, a man Paul's age, dying of end-stage colon cancer, was wheeled in to be our roommate. While Paul was still learning

what it meant to have a tumor in his intestines, this dying young man and his desperate wife (named Sue) gave us a glimpse into a future we didn't want to see. We quickly asked to be moved to a different room.

And what if I *had* heeded the signs, would it have helped? I'm sure I could have been more graceful. I could have moved our bed down from the upstairs bedroom sooner. I didn't need to throw my glass of iced tea against the wall the night the canister leaked bile all over the sheets. So dramatic. But my perfect future was slowly and painfully being ripped from my hands. Our white picket fence was crumbling.

Did Paul know where the journey would take us? How it would end up here with me speaking to you? He spoke in riddles at the end, telling me I was gifted, demanding that I not waste my life grieving for him. He made impossible demands on my heart.

I must have been the baby soul of our posse—struggling to keep up with those I loved. When they asked for a volunteer to drop into the physical realms and accomplish something hard, to be strong and help raise the limits of consciousness, I must have raised my hand—not really knowing what it entailed. But knowing I had to do something big and vast and brave—or be left behind. I remember someone telling me I had a courageous heart; it was just a whisper and then I was gone. How many hours have been wasted here in my pity? It's hard to tell. **But all that matters is before I leave this lifetime, before it's done, you have heard me.**

Part 1:

Lifting the Thin Veil Between the Realms

- 1. Stories of Visitation**
- 2. How Spirits Try to Connect With You**
- 3. Client Stories of Their Departed**

Chapter One: Stories of Visitation

The veil between the realms is thinner than you think—thin and transparent.

Close your eyes and feel it...

There was never a time when spirits didn't speak to me, walk across my bedroom at night, or whisper in my ear. They speak to you as well. You're just better able to dismiss it, more logically rooted in this physical world than I am—even though I've tried hard to ground myself in logical left-brain thinking.

Somewhere in my 1951 birthing, there was probably a vast undiscovered damage to my perfect brain—so big and precise it nearly diminished my left mind and left me mostly connected to the heavenly realms.

From early on, there were radiant beings who spoke to me in the flower garden where my mother planted daisies—and departed saints who stood beside me every Sunday in Church. It's a blessing I was Catholic; the Virgin Mary was a constant

presence in my life, one so real that I spoke to her out loud. I prayed the rosary daily from the time I learned how.

The mysterious city of New Orleans made my gifts seem almost normal. My intuitive Creole mother, descended from a long line of psychic women, was strong enough to see what I needed and help me get firmly rooted here. She spent her afternoons teaching me letters, sounding out the words precisely and logically until I could develop my left brain and read the pages. I was only three years old. It saved me. She believed I was gifted.

When I grew older and would hear what someone was going to say before they said it, time fell backwards and I withdrew. I'm sure I looked disturbed, troubled. I didn't understand the laughter and why they couldn't hear the whispers of those who stood around us. But I didn't like crazy. I was way too strong for that.

So I hit the dirt. Sprang into survival mode. I learned to think logically—to follow from A to B, to ignore the visions and dreams. I didn't want to disappoint my kind and logical father. I needed a paycheck. And when the whispers began to fade, I found myself an early career at the age of 20 teaching children to read and organize their left brains because that was what I needed. I became a Montessori preschool teacher to heal myself.

If I'd only known all along I was here to explain the world as I saw it—and not try to fit in or become like everyone else—I could have gotten my work done sooner. I've taken quite awhile to get this message to you, to help you realize the veil is thin, and that you came here on purpose with a mission. Yet this is the one thing I've always been sure of, and the gift I came to share.

My Father...

My dad, diagnosed with lung cancer **four weeks earlier**, has been in a coma for days, struggling for breath. My family takes turns caring for him at the hospital. I want to stay at his side today because I sense he's leaving. Yet it's my turn to babysit his five grandchildren—including my three-year-old daughter.

I kiss my dad on the forehead, tell him I love him and will see him soon. Back at Grandmother's house, I put the kids down to nap. Finally, they sleep. I'm free to meditate as I've done every day for thirty years.

Sitting on the couch, I close my eyes and repeat a mantra—an ancient Sanskrit sacred sound. Right away, my mind settles down. Instantly, my father is vividly in front of me, laughing and being goofy. He's young and healthy. I'm delighted to see him happy and animated. This image is so real and tangible, that I smile and say playfully, "Dad, what are you doing here?"

"DAD!" I repeat out loud opening my eyes—realizing that I've just clearly seen my dad who's in a hospital miles away—dying. I pick up the phone to call the hospital room. My brother answers.

"Jim, what's happening? I just saw Dad."

"He's had a heart attack. We're trying to stop the CPR efforts. It's chaos."

"I was meditating and he appeared in front of me—alive and happy."

"That's amazing, Sue. You're psychic," **he says sweetly but sarcastically**. "Now put the kids back in the car and come down here."

By the time I reach the hospital with my entourage of cranky toddlers, Dad's body is laid out peacefully on the hospital bed and my family is gathered around crying. I'm upset that I wasn't with him.

"He's gone," Jim says as I enter. "But you were with him more than we were. It was chaos here when it happened. You saw him as soon as he crossed over."

I'm still upset that I wasn't at his side to help him. But eventually I realize that Dad's spirit wasn't caught up in the crazy chaos going on in the hospital room. He was with me, and he was clearly happy and free! I'm grateful that I was sitting in meditation and able to see him so clearly.

Days later, as family gathers in the living room to discuss funeral arrangements, my three-year-old daughter runs into the room and stops suddenly. "Why is everyone crying?" she asks looking around at our sad faces.

"Because Grandpa died and we miss him," says my brother Tom.

"I just saw him fly past the window and he looked happy," she says with absolute innocence—looking at us confused, as if we've got it wrong.

My brother kneels in front of her and says gently, "Tell me what you saw, Sarah."

She describes my father looking young and happy—flying past the window and waving to her. It makes us all smile to imagine it. We believe her. It helps us.

Another Story ...

It's been a day that I'll have forever etched into my soul—July 13, 1980—the day my husband died. After our year-long battle with colon cancer, Paul has slipped

gracefully from his body, through my arms, and out to soar in the summer rain of a Colorado afternoon.

After weeks of exhausting medical traumas, I've come home from the hospital to sleep in our bed that now lives in the center of the living room. This bed is where we first shared love and dreams of the future—and finally morphine drips and Nasal-Gastric canisters that marked the end of Paul's life. At age thirty-five, he's gone.

His death has given me a gift of unquestionable awareness that we're souls on a journey and that life continues beyond the physical realms. But still he's gone. I'm widowed and alone at age twenty-nine. I already miss him.

Exhausted, I fall asleep in our bed and soon become aware that Paul is sleeping beside me. Of course, he's here. He's my husband and I can feel his warm fuzzy legs wrapped around mine. I feel him embracing me tightly and feel his breath on my hair. I can't remember where he's been—but he's home now.

After a while, a man dressed in white stands beside the bed. I think he must be a nurse. His long arm stretches over me to tap Paul. Slowly I realize he isn't wearing white and he isn't a nurse. He's emanating light. And he isn't human—but something else. I'm not sure what. As he reaches over me, Paul suddenly vanishes from beside me.

I open my eyes to see that it's 2 a.m., no one sleeps beside me and no one stands beside the bed dressed in white. I feel the unmistakable presence of a divine being. I realize Paul was here and a higher being came to move him on. His brief visit is over and his spirit guide is helping him move to the higher realms.

For several more nights, I'm awakened suddenly out of deep sleep—sensing a presence in the room. When I open my eyes, the clock reads the same time: 2 a.m. His visit is over.

A Client's Departed Mother Sends a Message:

It's 2011 and my eyes are closed in meditation as I prepare to work with a client. I can hear a persistent female voice in my ear saying: "I'm watching over my girls, having tea with them. Having tea with my girls..."

My client's name is Marya and she's thirty-four years old. During the session, I learn she's struggling with depression and can't get her career headed in the right direction. She hates her job.

The other woman's voice is still persistent in my ear. I describe the voice and the message to my client. "It's my mother!" says Marya. "She died suddenly ten years ago in a car accident. I have one sister. We were 'mom's girls.' We had tea with her every day when we were little. When we were older, she'd invite us over for tea and conversation."

I describe the persistent, almost obnoxious energy of this woman I heard speaking into my ear. "Yes, that's my mom," she says.

Her mother's death marked a terrible turning point for Marya. She was twenty-four years old when it happened and never got over the sudden loss. It launched her into a major depression. "Why did my mom die so horribly? I needed her," cries Marya. "When it happened, I decided the world was a dark place and I didn't want to be here. Nothing made sense anymore."

As we talk, a ray of sunlight shines through my office window onto the wall across from me. The sunlight, dappled by the moving leaves outside my window, creates a distinct shadow on the wall. It creates a perfect picture of a beautiful woman's face. I describe this face to Marya. It's her mom.

For the entire hour of the session, I stare at the perfect image of the woman's face on the wall. The face has never appeared before or since in my office. My client's mother was so determined that I give Marya a message, that she manifested a distinct image of herself for me to see.

"Your mother is still with you, watching over you," I tell Marya. "You have to live like you know she's watching. Make her proud of you."

By the end of our session, Marya's voice is lighter. She agrees to take several baby steps towards doing her great work and fulfilling her soul's mission.

How Our Dreams Can Heal Us

Many times when I've been in pain, a departed loved one has come into my dreams to heal me. I first published this story about my friend Crissie in my book *I See Your Soul Mate* and received so many emails from people telling me how the story helped them. I'm putting it into this book too in hopes it inspires you to connect with someone you've lost.

I met my lifelong best girlfriend Crissie in second grade on the swing set of our Catholic elementary school playground. Her crazy brilliance and insane wit bonded us instantly. Our first conversation went something like this (although she was doing all the talking): "Don't you think the word nunnery is weird, like a cannery? Why would a girl

choose to be canned...er...nunned? Do you think nuns all come out the same from a nunnery like peas from a cannery? What if Shakespeare said, ‘Get thee to a cannery!’ ”

As she talked, she cracked herself up, bending over in peals of giggles that had me laughing uncontrollably along with her. I realized I had found a true friend—someone who thought outside the box. I didn’t always understand her, but I loved her instantly.

Years later in seventh grade, the Beatles appeared on Ed Sullivan. Crissie and I were the only ones in our Catholic elementary school to have our lives changed at that moment. We knew the Beatles meant more than wonderful music and that they were showing us a bigger, more exciting life that we both wanted. We promised each other that we’d get out of the South as soon as we graduated high school and fulfill our huge dreams. She never let me forget that promise.

Her brilliance put her at the top of every class and got her accepted into Georgetown University in 1969 as one of a small group of the first women ever accepted to that prestigious college in Washington, DC. When I told her I had been accepted into University of Missouri to study journalism she forever called it “University of Misery” and told me I should have “aimed for a coast.” (She was right! But I wasn’t as smart as she was, so I was grateful for the chance to attend University of Misery.)

Our friendship lasted long beyond my stint at Misery and hers at Georgetown. Her first true love had been a fellow student at Georgetown University named Paul Frederick, to whom she became engaged. Two months before the big Southern wedding her parents had happily planned, Paul Frederick dumped her. Crissie never truly got over it.

Later when I moved to Colorado and met a handsome mountaineer named Paul Frederick (not the same guy), I was immediately leery of him. Would he break my heart

too? (Turns out he did.) Crissie was the first friend to come visit us and meet my new love whose name was the same as the man who broke her heart. She liked him instantly.

When my Paul Frederick was diagnosed with cancer, Crissie's frequent phone calls helped me cope. With Crissie, every conversation was about exploring new ideas, asking tough questions and searching for the truth—all done in a gleefully witty way. I adored her. She asked me the toughest questions anyone ever did. And she made me laugh harder than anyone I knew. She always told me I was a gifted writer and should “just write, dammit!”

Six months after Paul died Crissie came to visit. She cheered me up and challenged me simultaneously. What was I doing with my life now? Was I moving forward? Was I writing? She prodded and poked as we drove to the mountains to ski. She seemed healthy, energetic, lonely as usual, but generally happy with her California graduate student lifestyle. (She was getting a PhD in botany.)

On her flight back home to California, she noticed bruises appearing on her body. By the time she landed in San Francisco, she was covered in bruises and rushed by ambulance to the hospital. Her stunning leukemia diagnosis so soon after Paul's death was overwhelming. After this devastating news, I suffered several anxiety attacks where my throat would tighten up and I couldn't swallow or eat. I felt nauseated most of the time.

Crissie's mother moved to California to take care of her and her father got her into the most advanced treatment of the time—a bone marrow transplant at Fred Hutchinson Hospital in Seattle. Surrounded by friends and family she went through chemo and radiation treatments and nearly died during the torturous bone marrow

transplant. I couldn't understand why someone as bright, loving, and good as Crissie would have to go through such suffering—as horrible as Paul's experience. In deep despair and grief, I sold my belongings and moved to Mexico to teach fitness at a resort. I needed healing and was dropping out of a world that made no sense anymore.

When Crissie was finally in remission, she moved back to California and resumed graduate school studies. But she was only thirty-one years old and had been through hell. She was in a deep spiritual crisis, wondering what the purpose of life was. I understood her pain.

We stayed in touch with letters and phone calls. She began getting her life going again and started to feel better. She yelled at me when I told her I was in love with a married (but separated) Mexican man named Emilio who ran the local dive shop. “Sue Ellen, you'll only get your heart broken! You're a writer so you can use it in something I guess...but really. Come back home and write, dammit!” I couldn't come home yet. My peaceful life of snorkeling and diving everyday with Emilio was a form of healing for me—even if I knew Emilio would never be my lifelong partner. I loved him anyway.

Crissie and I made a plan to see each other back on our childhood turf. Crissie flew to the Gulf Coast to visit her family at the same time I flew home to visit mine. Our dads both owned fishing boats and had beach houses. Crissie's dad brought her over to the harbor near our beach house to spend time with us. My dad (who loved Crissie) took us fishing and boating. When we got bored with fishing, he dropped us off at a remote island to talk while he fished around the island.

Crissie and I walked and talked for hours along the sandy shore and crystal-clear water of our tiny remote island. We talked about her ongoing struggle with leukemia, her

bone marrow transplant, her feelings about death, my grief over Paul, my attempts to end my ill-fated relationship with Emilio, and her heartbreaking belief that she would never find a soul mate or have children. She felt alone and unlovable. “What’s the hardest part?” I asked her. “Disappointing my dad,” she said as tears flowed. “He wants me to live so badly...” I knew then that she was dying, no matter what the doctors said. I recognized the process of letting go that she was experiencing. It was the same conversation I’d had with Paul.

When my dad picked us up on the island, he took us back to the marina where Crissie’s dad waited on his fishing boat. As our dads laughed and joked with each other, Crissie and I hugged one last time. She couldn’t look me in the eye as she turned away and stepped onto her dad’s boat. As their boat moved out of the harbor, Crissie and I waved. When she was out of view, I broke down in uncontrollable sobs. My dad gently asked, “Why are you so sad? She looks great. She’s going to make it.” I turned to him crying and said, “Dad, this is the last time I’ll ever see her. I know it.” Crissie returned to her home in California. I returned to Mexico. Three months later she was dead.

The night of her death, before I knew she had died, Crissie came to me in my dreams. We spent the entire night laughing and giggling together (the way she and I always did). When I woke up, my stomach muscles were actually sore from laughing so hard. I’ve never before or since experienced such physical sensations after a dream as I did from that night with Crissie.

That morning as I was making coffee and about to call the states and check in with Crissie, I got the phone call telling me she had died during the night. I realized she

had visited me in my dreams to let me know she was fine and to tell me that death wasn't the end of anything.

But Crissie wasn't done teaching me yet. A year later, I was finally back living in the states, heartbroken over Emilio, and trying to get my life and career on track. My grief over the loss of Crissie, Paul, and Emilio was weighing me down with sadness and depression.

One night, Crissie came to me in a dream and healed my heartbreak. In the dream, Crissie and I are standing on a white stone balcony overlooking an emerald green sea. It's peaceful and extraordinarily beautiful and I feel so content standing beside her. We're talking as we always did but not using words. She's standing a bit behind me and to my left as we look out over the water. I notice that her physical body is shimmering and seems to be more like dappled light than a fully formed physical presence. The form that I know as Crissie is changing. Her hand is on my back, rubbing it in circles while she talks to me. We're discussing my heartbreak over Emilio.

She pulls out several handwritten letters on many different pieces of stationary that Emilio had written to his estranged wife (who lived in another city during our relationship). In the letters, Emilio is professing his undying love for his wife. Page after page contains stories of how well his diving business is going and how wonderful their life will be when he returns home to her. Crissie makes it clear to me that Emilio never really loved me and I have to let him go and move on. As she shows me these letters, my pain and grief from all of my losses wells up in my chest. While she rubs my back, a loud wailing cry escapes me; the sound soars across the emerald sea in front of us. It's powerful, ancient, and deep—louder than any sound I've ever made. As this pain pours

out of me and flows across the water, Crissie lovingly rubs my back and encourages me to let it all go.

When I've finished crying, Crissie slowly disappears beside me. I wake up still hearing the sound of my painful wailing and feeling Crissie's hand on my back. I cry most of the morning. But as the days go by, I realize that my grief has subsided. Finally I'm able to begin a journey of reinvention and spiritual exploration that pushes me towards the work I do today.