

A Far away Shore



It's a month since my Dads death, and the world has moved on
The black clothes worn, the loss acknowledged
Friends and colleagues move back to their busy, cluttered lives
And we unsmiling few leave the harbour of the funeral to set out on the long turbulent
voyage to the port of "closure".

I have sat in surreal, out of body self watching at how people react to loss
The passersby (literally) on the other side of the street
The folk I thought I knew, but who can't bring themselves to say anything about my Dad
Others who acknowledge with darting eyes that refuse to meet mine
Who search for little scraps of consolation to feed me: he died peacefully, he had a good life,
he loved you all, he was a good man.....

Not yet please, not yet.

A very few understand the wilderness country that lies beyond the bereavement cards and
single "sorry about your news" emails

They listen and speak their truths of love and care, sometimes cradling and sharing their
own losses

Mostly that is enough

The beam of our influence lessens over the years and our lighthouse is left shining a truthful
and consistent path for a few.

I am left with a hole where my Dad was
Where he has been for 83 years with all his gifts and frailties
His tics, his shticks, his talking too loud on the phone, his wonder at my kids
His loss of his wife, his bewilderment at life without her
His little expressions, his pride in us, his kids
His pathetic gratefulness for any good deed done
His spitefulness if crossed.

So, I grit my teeth through the weeks
Hoping that each dark night of the soul can be endured
Guilty sometimes at the inherent pleasure I take in my kids smiles, their innate ability to
make me feel good
Or a shared private joke with my wife, before remembering the heavy burden of loss.

I think of my own life at 50+
How many years, how many decades have I got left here?
How will my children cope when I go?
I have an urgent need to hold onto life
I want to be fitter and healthier and last forever, though know I can't
I want to have adventures with Sally, watch my kids grow
Grow old with my wife, spoil grandchildren maybe.

There are many miles to travel before I see my Dad again
I know I won't run away from the missing him
This strange beautiful pain of sadness
I wonder where he is, if he's an entity, a spirit?
And hope and pray he's with my brother in a safe place, a far away shore
My Pa, my Dad, my Dad.