

San Antonio, Tx
Audie Murphy VA

25 August 2019
Pharmacy

A terrible tragedy here yesterday: A just married couple, he was 19, she was 20, both were killed in a traffic accident after leaving the wedding service just east of Beaumont. They hadn't even been married 30 minutes.

With all the sad and tragic news in our world it's easy to become inured to it all. But that in itself is the tragic affect of living in our world. Yet, there are moments that break through. For me – this was one. It settles me into a reflection upon the natural forces that are also at play in our world in addition to the chaos of manmade ones.

Of course few could see any universal good in the loss of these young lives on a day that should have been their most joyful. It shocks the soul. It does not follow the patterns by which we shape our lives: spring follows winter, rainbows after storms and parents are to precede children in the great rhythm of life and death. We live by such belief in patterns; we plant our crops by it, our vacations and even our ideals of romance.

Though young, they'd made a decision, they forged a bond and they'd followed the hallowed tradition of matrimony. The force of their love and their will moved along the natural path to 'I do.' I have always admired young people who commit, who set out bravely as one for that distant horizon, come what may. The Romeo and Juliet ending doesn't change my admiration of it all.

I don't require such dark and terrible endings to be reminded that such harsh forces exist. Over 3,700 die each year on these Texas roads and worldwide, over a million lose their lives in car accidents. Numbers matter, but numbers, faceless as they are, don't quite capture this loss. For me, the 30 minutes or less does matter.

It's this short passing of time, less than it takes to cook a meal, read a newspaper or to iron a shirt for church that jolts me to the core. It unsettles the hope I've long held in the expected patterns of life. But, meals, newspapers and shirts are far trivial things that we never even think about. I think about them, this young couple, sit beside them, see them, in the full bloom of such tender youth, their faces alight with love and joy.

Those last longing looks into each other's eyes where tomorrow had lain unopened. That last sweet kiss, the warm and tender breath upon the lips and the last utterance of those three words that led to the altar.

Then – glass, noise, metal and nothingness. A senseless end to a promised future. A dire violation of the patterns by which we shape our dreams. The undoing of love, the tenderest bloom, far too soon.

It is the deepest loss for those families who have been terribly changed; of dreams unfulfilled, of nurseries left unpainted, of childish laughter never heard, and of grandchildren never to be held, and of a nagging emptiness in years to come.

But it reaches beyond them. For those not so quick to turn the page or the channel. For those whose hearts can still be reached, even pierced, whose eyes linger a bit longer to connect; to grasp such loss down deep where we too once held such dreams. To feel that trembled sigh within escape from that hidden place where all of yesterday's 'what ifs' linger long after our season is past.

To feel within that shared knowingness of human loss, to accept its reach despite our fear and to release that long-held tear that joins us all and to accept its place. Lastly, to tremble in our knowingness of the smallness of our hopes. Though I could never know them, I share this loss: we, by such loss of tender love, have been utterly changed, if we will but for a moment - feel it.

By their love, we must honor them through the days we have ahead; to strengthen our ties, our commitments, and our loving bonds. To live fully in our days what these too soon departed could only be granted in heaven. To those who turn not the page, whose eyes and hearts linger longer – that what love is meant to be in our world will now shine bright as theirs.

But I'm just a stranger passing by with an eye for capturing the invisible-life.