



**Flowers**  
of the  
**Heart**

**Growing Through Grief**

A Collection of Poems by  
**Nola Peterson Neeley**  
*and selected others*

# Flowers of the Heart

*Growing Through Grief...*

A collection of poems by  
**Nola Peterson Neeley**  
and selected others.

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Aliso Viejo, California

To One in Sorrow

Let me come in where  
You are weeping, friend  
And let me take your hand.  
I, who have known a sorrow  
Such as yours,  
Can understand.

Let me come in -  
I would be very still  
Beside you in your grief.  
I would not bid you  
Cease your weeping friend,  
Tears bring relief.

Let me come in -  
I would only breathe a prayer  
And hold your hand.  
For I have known a  
Sorrow such as yours,  
...And understand.

*Grace Noll Crowell*



## **Dedication**

*To my eldest son, Robert  
my dearest mother, Nan  
my supportive husband, Ken  
my loving children and their families  
my brothers and sisters  
my closest friends  
my Relief Society sisters  
and to all who are growing through grief*

*“...through mingled tears bloom flowers of the heart.”*

*Nola Peterson Neeley*



Section I:

Growing  
Through  
Grief





## The Denial

"No!" I cry...

"My heart will not accept this blow..."

"No!" I scream...

My clenched fists beat against a faceless foe...

"No!" I sob...

"I cannot, will not, hear these words of sorrow..."

"No! No! No!..."

This night will pass, all will be fine - tomorrow."

Hot tears well up to fight this devastating grief...

My body slumps in anguish,

"Where can I find relief?"

*Nola Peterson Neeley*

## The Anger

"How could you let this happen?"

Fierce anger feeds my tears...  
Alone and full of sorrow  
I look ahead to endless years.

"You were supposed to care for us."

My body slumps in pain...  
The burden now is mine to bear  
At once I feel the strain.

"You always knew just what to do."

My mind reels with distress...  
For life's complicated problems  
I'm unarmed and powerless.

"You were so strong and unafraid."

My heart's full of despair...  
Now, frightened and alone I cry  
For tender strength and care.

"You left us, never looking back

As if you had a choice  
I need your words of love and hope  
I miss your gentle voice."

"At times I'm angry and embittered

Yet still want you to know...  
That loving you was wonderful  
That's why I miss you so!  
That's why I'm hurting so!"

*Nola Peterson Neeley*

## The Acceptance

Can it be so?  
My loved one has been taken?  
    I scarce believe the news  
My heart is shaken.

My dear one gone?  
How can I face the morrow?  
    "Yes, it is true."  
I can't conceal my sorrow.

A washing tide,  
Releasing pain and grief  
    The tears flow freely now  
Erasing doubt and disbelief.

The truth is hard,  
New knowledge fills my soul  
    "My loved one's gone", it whispers.  
"Yes, I know."

The mirror's cracked,  
My vision blurs awhile  
    Yet friends abound, they ease the pain,  
I try to smile.

Accept the fact,  
Life's measured not in earthly years  
    "I need thee, Lord", my prayer ascends  
Through crystal tears.

*Nola Peterson Neeley*

## The Grieving

My broken heart's aching  
I scarcely can breathe  
    I feel buried with pain and with tears.

The scrapbooks lay open  
Wet spots mark the pages  
    Of mem'ries, - of happy, filled years.

My mind reels in circles  
With the things I must do  
    But my body is fighting the chore.

Getting dressed is a burden  
I see through a haze  
    It seems I don't care anymore.

I'm hungry - yet can't eat  
I'm tired - can't sleep  
    I'm weary and saddened and spent.

The days seem so long now  
The nights never end  
    I awaken to feelings of dread.

As I grieve for my loved one  
I'm empty and drained  
    My muffled cries quiet - I pray...

In you come through my gate  
Bringing food for my soul,  
    And friendship's bright spark lights my day.

*Nola Peterson Neeley*

## The Sharing

I shared the sorrow of my soul with you today  
Your heart wept silently  
Beside me in my grief

I grasped your hand and felt the spirit's warmth  
Send radiating hope  
And tears release

A flood of love for you, my precious friend  
You understand...you understand  
The deepest part

A bond of love has blossomed in this span  
Through mingled tears  
Bloom flowers of the heart.

*Nola Peterson Neeley*

## The Healing

My heart, it seems, begins to mend  
the aching's less severe.  
The longing and the mem'ries dim  
my eyes refuse to tear.

But deep inside my heart is raw  
and no one else can know  
The healing's on the outside,  
inside - I miss him so!

The tears are falling in my soul  
when will this longing end?  
And then come words, so sweet and low  
"I'll cry with you, my friend."

"I'll cry with you and ease your hurt  
I'll wipe your tears away.  
"for as my Son, in agony,  
hung on the cross that day,

"you cried with me from heaven's veil  
your tender heart pierced too!  
"and now I feel your grief and pain  
and I will cry with you."

"I'll ache with you until you're strong  
I'll feel the pain you feel  
Until the blessings from *my* Son  
will sweetly...softly...heal."

*Nola Peterson Neeley*

## The Peace

A quiet cloak of peace  
    Enwrapped my soul today  
I can't explain just how or when it came.

But with a soft and tender answer  
    To the torment and the grief  
Came a whisper to my heart that eased the pain.

Sweet assurance from the Lord  
    "Let your troubled mind be soothed  
Your dear one's happy and content now -  
    Here with me."

"Know that loving arms enfold him  
    And the time will shortly come  
When death's earthly bonds are loosed -  
    Eternally."

*Nola Peterson Neeley*



## The Whispers

I heard the whispers last night  
As my soul was filled with pure light  
Knowledge and wisdom -a gift from above  
Sent on the wings of a prayer filled with love.

Whispers to guide through the day  
Whispers to show me the way  
Love from a father to a child in great need  
Guidance from heaven, my footsteps to lead

I was searching when my path was dark  
For someone to kindle a spark  
The Lord spoke in whispers from heaven above  
Whispers...whispers of love

Whispers to lead through the night  
Whispers to teach what is right  
Through pain and sorrow, to lighten the load  
Eternal light sharing to brighten the road.

Yes, I heard the whispers last night  
As my soul was touched by pure light  
A warmth filled my being  
A joy filled my heart...  
The Lord sent the answers!  
To heed is my part.

The Lord speaks in whispers from heaven above  
Whispers...whispers of love.

*Nola Peterson Neeley*

## The Promise

You'll live again, you'll laugh again  
The world will soon be bright,  
The grass that's dead and brown will spring anew.

The heav'ns resound in glory  
As I hear the savior's words,  
"I go now to prepare a place for you."

"Let not your heart be troubled  
And be thou not afraid,  
I died on Calvary's cross that you might live."

"Live forever with your loved ones  
If you but keep my word  
And share the love and joy this message gives."

"Soon with myriads of angels  
Your loved one will descend  
And with tears of joy and gladness you'll embrace."

"For I, the Lord, have told my children  
That through me shall all arise  
The time is short--ere long you'll see my face."

And yet my heart still questions  
We all shall live again?  
If with love and faith we seek to do thy will?

"Yes, my child," he sweetly answers,  
"So go forth in strength and hope.  
I promise you. Now let your heart be still."

*Nola Peterson Neeley*

## The Message

To those I love...

If I should ever leave you, whom I love  
To go along the silent way,  
Grieve not  
Nor speak of me with tears  
But laugh and talk  
Of me as if I were beside you there.

I'd come-I'd come,  
Could I but find a way!  
But would not tears and grief  
Be barriers?

And when you see a bird  
Or hear a song I loved,  
Please do not let the thought of me be sad  
For I am loving you  
Just as I always have...  
You were so good to me!

There are so many things I wanted still to do -  
So many things to say to you...  
Remember, that I did not fear...  
It was just leaving you that was so hard to face.

We cannot see beyond, but this I know...  
I loved you so,  
'Twas heaven here with you!

*Anonymous*

Section II:  
Selected Poems



## Angels

Some people feel we have to wait  
until eternity  
To see the angels by our side,  
assisting quietly

Guiding through the tough times  
serving cheerfully  
A special gift from Heaven sent  
to teach us charity

But I attest that here and now  
we may be blessed to know  
The angels God has loaned to us  
to help us here below

For you have been an Angel  
giving so unselfishly  
You are my precious Angel friend,  
a priceless gift to me.

*Nola Peterson Neeley*

## Empathy

She's hurting . . .

my friend.

I see the sadness

in her heart

spill out her eyes

I feel the anguish in her grasp

and wish my heart could encircle

and warm her pain as easily

as my arm draws her close.

Powerless,

I have no weapon,

no solace,

no balm

Only my love . . .

. . . and His.

*Nola Peterson Neeley*





## On Removing Life-Support

Decision,  
Decision,  
Hopeless either way  
    To live without living...  
    Let you go away to stay.

Wrenched  
Coerced  
Into a sterile sphere  
    Love & life are foreign...  
    Yet physically you're near.

Decision,  
Decision,  
Is it life or death?  
    We must choose the verdict  
    There seems no right or best!

*Nola Peterson Neeley*



## Caverns of the Heart

My broken heart swells, wide as eternity,  
Creating a cavern of unknown depth.  
Sorrowful tears flow, enlarging the cavity,  
I refuse all comfort for which I have wept.

“Not this time, not this pain—it’s too deep for healing!  
No one can understand all of my grief.”  
I weep in the cavern and pour out my anguish,  
“When will my sorrow end? When comes relief?”

The sound of each tear drop in puddles of loneliness,  
Echoes my prayer to the heavens above,  
And quietly Jesus appears sitting next to me,  
Sharing, in silence, the tears of his love.

I turn to him, fall on him, helplessly weeping.  
He understands, for he’s been there before.  
Together we rise and we exit the cavity,  
Leaving behind us the sorrowful shore.

Gently he speaks and a well springs within me,  
Filling my cavern of lonely despair,  
With joy overflowing, no sorrow, no sadness,  
A reservoir endless, sufficient to share.

*Matthew Joseph Neeley*

## I Feel the Spirit

I feel the Spirit,  
Gentle the peace.  
Love in my heart begins to increase.  
Joy, faith, and comfort--  
Heaven is near.  
I feel the Holy Spirit here.

I feel the Spirit  
Teaching with love  
Truth sent from Father and witnessing of  
Jesus, my Savior.  
I will rejoice  
Hearing the Holy Spirit's voice.

I feel the Spirit,  
Quiet and kind,  
Prompting, inspiring, enlight'ning my mind.  
Softly He whispers.  
I will obey,  
Led by the Spirit on my way.

*Matthew Joseph Neeley*

## A Quiet Place Alone

Today I seek a quiet place alone  
Where I can pray and lift my heart to God,  
And cast before His loving throne  
A quiet hurt to all unknown  
But Him.

I know that He has pow'r to cool my pain  
And bring His quiet peace into my life again  
And so I kneel with yearning heart  
And offer up the deepest part  
Of me.

He hears me and He shares with me each sorrow.  
He waits for me each day and each tomorrow  
To share my pain. He comprehends!  
He listens as He sweetly mends  
My heart.

*Matthew Joseph Neeley*

## Lifting Me Quietly To Heaven

Beside me in my grief or pain  
I feel his loving hand again  
Lifting me.

Like dew upon the wilted leaf  
His love revives and brings relief  
Quietly.

So like the sun, He sends his rays  
To lift each bloom or soul that strays  
To heaven.

*Matthew Joseph Neeley*

## A Poet Mother

A poet mother speaks her heart  
And calms her newborn baby boy  
With cooing sounds of love and peace  
She comforts him with soothing joy

Love's language springs within her soul  
A gift of love she can't restrain  
It ever flows with sweet release  
She bears and shares her heart's refrain

And from her deepest pain she pours  
A balm that heals the broken heart  
A cup of hope for thirsting souls  
They drink the faith her songs impart

Each page of life she gladly turns  
And sings into the open air  
With joyful voice that all may hear  
The message she finds written there

A poet mother speaks her heart  
And I, though old, am young again  
Can hear and feel her cooing voice  
As if in cradled arms she sang

*Matthew Joseph Neeley*

## Come Home

Come home, my child, come home  
I long to hold you tight..  
Enfold you in my loving arms  
And lead you back to heaven's light.

Be strong, my child, be strong  
For Satan's ever near  
Lift up your eyes and voice and heart  
To me... I'm waiting here.

Be true, my child, be true  
And serve your fellowman  
Till with tears of gratitude and love  
I call you home again.

Come home to me unscathed  
Come home, to loved ones sweet  
Come home and bring your harvest rich  
To lay at Father's feet.

*Nola Peterson Neeley*



## Picture Home

Picture yourself arriving home  
Picture the welcoming throng  
Picture the sea of out-stretched arms  
Back home...where you belong

Picture the Savior's tender look  
Picture the joy you'll feel  
At His warm embrace  
and loving words,  
Sometimes it seems so real

He knows at times you're weary,  
With heartaches & grief to bear  
So in your mind just picture home  
With Jesus waiting there.

Picture the future reunion  
Catch the vision of that great day  
To the delight of your  
Heavenly Family  
You're coming home...  
    Coming home today!

Welcome home!  
    Welcome home to stay!

*Nola Peterson Neeley*

Section III:

# Losing Robert

*Excerpts from the journal of  
Matthew Joseph Neeley*

## Losing Robert

Rob was 24 years old in 1984. He was attending BYU and was actively involved with the Young Ambassadors. Living so far away from home and being on tour, the family didn't get to see much of him (as much as the family wanted), except at Christmas time, Easter, and part of the summer.

The family loved to have Rob in the house. He was a peacemaker and fun to be around. It seemed that when he was home, the house was full of music and excitement. Rob could even make Saturday morning chores seem fun to do.

Rob loved to sing. He knew all the verses of almost any song. He and I shared a special bond through our music. His voice with my piano could really bring a special spirit into our home, a sacrament meeting, a fireside, or a baptism. Much of the summer of 1983 was spent learning, practicing, playing, and singing songs together.

Rob had a talent for making people feel loved. In the summer of 1983, Robert, who was completely broke, started up a song and dance company for teenagers to earn money for school. He taught them songs and steps he had learned at BYU. Of course, I played the piano for the group. During rehearsals, Rob would take time to individually help and strengthen the individual members of the group. They all thought of him as an older brother and friend.

Rob loved to collect things--especially family heirlooms. I remember Rob would open up his antique carpenter's tool chest (which he used as a hope chest) and take out his precious treasures one by one, and explain a story about each one. Through his stories and the love he demonstrated for his heritage, I felt his testimony on the importance of families and genealogy.

This impressed me greatly so that within a short period of time, I had searched out an old chest of my own and began collecting the treasures of my life. Rob started me on many hobbies, including collecting rocks, collecting stamps, tying flies, and other things.

Rob was a great brother and a good example for all of us. His closeness to the Lord and love for spiritual things has influenced me greatly.

### **The Accident**

At the time of his death, Dad and I were taking a computer class together at Cal Poly Pomona. We drove to school 2 days a week after work. On Thursday, May 31, 1984 is when it all began... Dad and I drove to Cal Poly and arrived early to finish our final projects. As we approached the library basement, I heard someone yell, "Matthew!" I looked up and saw Scott and Brian running towards us. Upon arriving they said something like: "Dad! Grab your things! You've got to come home with us! There's

been an accident! Rob's car was struck by lightning!" (Scott's story was a little mixed up because he had heard it 4th hand.) Rob, himself, was actually struck by lightning while walking under a tree at a friend's home in Mapleton, Utah.

At this time, however, there were a lot of unanswered questions and nervous feelings as Dad left immediately with Scott and Brian. I had to stay another 15 minutes to turn in a project. And as soon as I had done so, I ran to the car and sped all the way home.

Upon arriving home, I saw about 5 or 6 cars in front of the house and Mom with the Bishop's wife crying in the doorway. My first impression was that Rob must have actually died. With fear and haste, I ran to them and asked whether he had. "No," Mom said. "Then why are you crying?" I asked. She tearfully replied, "Because it doesn't look like he's going to make it." Confused and upset, I swiftly walked away with a lump forming in my throat. I didn't want to hear talking like that.

Mom and Dad missed their 6:00 p.m. flight to Utah. This turned out to be a blessing as it allowed us to drive up together as a family. By the time we packed a few clothes and brought them downstairs, the Smith's van was in front of the house full of gas and food. Before leaving, the ward members wrote down all of our responsibilities and commitments and told us not to worry, "they would all be taken care of."

Bishop Homes and President Heslop gave Mom and Dad a blessing before we left. All the family gathered in the living room and listened. President Heslop blessed Dad and Bishop Homes blessed Mom. I remember feeling the spirit strongly as Bishop Holmes paused and said, "...And now I feel through the inspiration of the Lord to bless you, that through your faith you may see what the Lord has in store." Both blessings were sweet and beautiful. They were strong in spirit and in love. I noticed that they were mainly directed at having faith enough to accept whatever would happen.

After that, we had family prayer and piled into the van--we were on our way to Provo, Utah to see Rob.

### **The Trip**

Most of us were fasting and praying that Rob would be kept alive till we arrived. We drove up straight-stopping only for gas and a periodic informational phone call.

It was a long trip from California to Utah. The family needed that time together to talk about the situation and prepare ourselves for that which was to come.

In the van, we played the tape "Love One Another" (a tape of church songs sung by a women's choir). The songs were beautiful and gave comfort to the family, especially Mom.

I spent part of the trip lying in the back of the van, silently praying with unseen tears streaming down my face. I wasn't praying for Rob to be restored to full health, only that he would be kept alive till we arrived. I prayed for a confirmation...to know that the Lord was involved and in control. I didn't want to fight the Lord's will, I only wanted to know it. Although I cried and prayed for a confirmation, I did not receive one at this time.

Later as we drove in the van, I remembered a recent discussion where Dad had taught me about "natural law versus the Lord's will." I turned to him in the van and asked, "What do you think this was caused by, Dad, natural laws or the Lord's will?" He turned from the starry night and replied "Matthew, I really don't know. And we may never know in this life." At this time I wanted to know how Dad looked at the situation. I was trying to decide how I should see things, what my attitude should be, and what I should believe. I was impressed with Dad's answer; it caused me to turn back in my seat and ponder.

Why did it happen? What was the Lord's purpose? Was this His will?

### **The Arrival at the Hospital**

We drove all night and arrived in Provo the next morning, Friday, June 1, 1984. The trip was long and filled with tears, but at last we arrived. In just a few

moments, we would see Rob. We would find out for ourselves how bad the situation really was. For me, the hardest part of the trip was walking up the hospital stairs and down the long hallways.

As we walked into the Intensive Care Unit, we saw about 50 of our relatives in the hall outside his room. Mom hugged her sisters and began to cry. I smiled politely and walked by them all. I wanted to see Robert.

We walked in alone, just our family. We saw Rob lying in a bed with wires stuck to his chest, a respirator in his mouth, and tubes in his nose. His body was very swollen and breathed unnaturally. He didn't look good at all. It hurt me to see Robert in this condition. I felt I couldn't bear it and needed to leave the room. I didn't want to look anymore--I needed to be alone.

I left his bedside and walked back into the hall. At that moment I realized that I was the first member of the family to return to the relatives. All of their eyes were focused on me as if to see a reaction, but I had none. I had no words. I had nothing to say. I just kept moving, walking past them all, looking at the ground and shaking my head as if to say, 'I can't believe it'.

I continued walking down the corridor until it turned a corner. When I knew they couldn't see me, I leaned my head against the wall and wept bitterly till I had no tears. Aunt Gwennie followed me around the corner and put her arm around me. She cried with me. It



hurt so bad! I knew what the Lord wanted--he wanted my brother! But why? I felt drained emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Later, Scott came and found me. He told me that Dad wanted to give Rob a blessing and that Dad wanted me to perform the anointing. I really wanted to. I anointed Rob's head and performed my part of the ordinance. Then Dad, my older brothers, and 2 of my uncles joined with me as Dad sealed the anointing and blessed Robert. Dad blessed Robert that the Father's will would be done, that our family would be strong, and that we would accept the result. As much as Dad wanted to, he did not bless Robert back to health.

After the blessing, with tears in our eyes, we hugged each other and looked down at Robert. He didn't look good. The lightning had entered his body in the back of the head, shot down his right side, and exited his body through his right foot, leaving singed hair and horrible scars from the bolt. The doctor showed us the terrible burns on his right chest and explained that lightning burns from the inside out. This meant Rob's insides were severely scarred.

It grew late and we were all tired. It was arranged for Mom and Dad to sleep in a hospital guest room downstairs, while the Relief Society sisters in Rob's ward took us kids, fed us, and found places for us to sleep with ward members in Rob's apartment complex.

We arrived at the hospital early the next morning, Saturday, June 2, 1984. As we entered Rob's room, there seemed to be no change at all. They told us the doctors would be coming later to give him a brain test (EKG). The family waited patiently in the lobby and in the waiting rooms. I was quiet and pensive much of the time. I felt the deep desire to play the piano. All of the relatives gave the family a lot of support and strength, especially Mom. She would hug, talk, and share tears with everyone who walked in. Rob's friends from school came to see him and nearly all of the Young Ambassadors came by.

Later, we took time to go to the house where the accident occurred. Mom cried as they related the story. I was in a quiet mood with many thoughts. We walked over the footbridge and stood near the trees where the lightning struck. It all seemed a bad dream, but it was true.

Soon we headed back to the hospital, saw Rob, and continued to wait. As we waited, Uncle John played a tape of Rob and Johnny singing a song which Johnny had written for a close friend who nearly died. As we heard Rob's voice, we all cried...especially at the message.

*Time pieces tick,  
The hours rush by  
Each man must listen  
No one can hide  
The law was decreed  
And the whole world must abide*

*Winter comes, winter goes  
Summer then spring  
With each passing season,  
An older man brings  
A small child grows tall  
Listening each hour as the cuckoo sings*

*I can take an 'if I dare'  
Make me worthy  
To God's Kingdom share  
Time can take a willing man  
Anywhere*

*For some are here long  
Others are shortly gone  
Yet God grants to all  
To sing their song*

*Some are here long  
Others are shortly gone  
Live my life as I will  
Time can never stand still*

Later, the doctor returned with the results of the EKG. We closed the door to the waiting room as he spoke to our immediate family. The doctor spoke candidly and directed his remarks to Mom and Dad. He reported that the EKG showed Robert's brain to be 'flat'. He said there had been no response at all to the EKG. He recommended the removal of the life

support system but said he would do whatever the family wanted.

Dad, aside from his tears, held up pretty well. I think it was more difficult for Mom to discern her feelings. She later wrote a poem which accurately describes the turmoil we felt after hearing the test results. It's entitled, *On Removing Life Support*.

*Decision*

*Decision*

*Hopeless either way*

*To live without living*

*Let you go away to stay.*

*Wrenched*

*Coerced*

*Into a sterile sphere*

*Love and life are foreign*

*Yet physically you're near.*

*Decision*

*Decision*

*Is it life or death?*

*We must choose the verdict*

*There seems no right or best.*

We talked about the results and cried. We prayed as a family and visited Rob. A few minutes later, Dad and I stood alone at the foot of Rob's bed. I found myself watching Dad and looking to him for direction. I wondered how he was feeling. "Dad," I said, "I bet you

now have a deeper understanding of how Heavenly Father felt seeing His son die." Dad folded his arms and nodded his head. "Yes," he said as tears rolled down his face. I asked him what he was thinking about. He took my right elbow in his left and pulled me close, saying, "Matthew, I'm just trying to see if there is an inner meaning in all this or if there is some lesson to be learned so I won't have to pass through this again."

We cried together and looked down at Robert. It was clear. The Lord was calling him home.

Once it was confirmed that Rob's condition was irreversible, Mom and Dad asked to have the life support removed. Rob officially died on Saturday, June 2, 1984. After the nurses removed the wires and tubes, washed his face, and combed his hair, they invited us in to see his body.

Just our family entered first. We gathered around his bed in a circle. He looked different. His body was still and lifeless. Robert was no longer bound to this world--he was free. I felt his presence in the room, outside of his body. I knew his spirit was with us. I pictured Robert looking upon each member of the family and feeling so happy for the love and relationship he shared with each of us. Somehow I knew that he looked upon Mom and Dad and tried to comfort them.

A few minutes later, the visiting relatives came in to say good-bye to Robert. Hungry, tired, and emotionally drained, we all went out to eat as a

family. After dinner, we split up to the homes of our relatives to spend the night.

Mom asked me if I would like to stay and help plan out the funeral. I didn't want to--I needed to get away--to be alone. I chose to go with the Peterson's and spent the rest of the day with my cousin, Kim.

Sunday afternoon, June 3, 1984, we brought our clothes and things to Rob's friends, the Christiansens, to camp out for a while. We played the piano, sang, and prepared for the days ahead. Dad bought me a suit for the funeral, which he said would also be for my mission.

### **The Funeral**

Tuesday, June 5, 1984, we held a funeral for Rob at the chapel near the Provo Temple. There was a viewing at 11:00 am and a service at 12:00 pm. The program consisted of Mom, who spoke on Rob's family mission; one of Rob's missionary companions, who spoke on his Oklahoma mission; Randy Boothe, who spoke on Rob's worldwide mission; and Grandma Neeley's brother, Delbert, who spoke on Rob's celestial mission.

The Young Ambassadors sang and filled the chapel with beautiful music. Every song was meaningful to Rob. They sang: *Well Done Thou Good and Faithful Servant, I am a Child of God, The Song of the Lord*, and

*I See a Light Within Your Eyes.* Scott and Johnny Bryner sang, *Time*, but couldn't make it through. The music was beautiful and had such a powerful influence that all wept tears of joy and sorrow, and love.

After the Provo funeral service, we drove to California to hold a second funeral. When we arrived home, we found every room in the house had been cleaned. The house, yard, and even trees were immaculate. The home wards had gotten together and had organized everything. This act of service relieved many of the nerves and tension that the family was feeling and especially comforted Mom.

We had a viewing both Wednesday night and Thursday morning before the funeral. Just before the service began, the family gathered in a separate room to close the casket.

The California funeral started with Brian saying the opening prayer. Mom and Uncle Jon Neeley spoke on his family mission; Ken Stewart and Paul Guerrero spoke on Rob's friendship mission; Johanne Frechette and Steve Perry spoke on his worldwide mission; and Dad spoke on 'Remembrances of Rob'. I played a piano tribute. Paul Hatch spoke on Rob's celestial mission and Scott closed with prayer.

During my piano tribute, I pictured Robert by the side of the piano, as I had seen him so many times before. I played from my heart. The talks were meaningful,

the music was beautiful, and I felt Rob's presence through it all. I realized how wonderful it is to be part of a strong family--strong in the gospel, and strong in love.

In a funeral parade, the family and special friends drove to Rose Hills where Dad dedicated the grave. After his prayer, we all sang *Love One Another*.

During the singing, the crowd faded from my view. I looked over the great LA basin and could see buildings, trees, and the mountains near our home. The sky was filled with clouds--some white, some gray, some low, some high. The sun shone brightly through them all, sending glorious beams across the valley floor. As I marveled at this sight, I imagined the resurrection day when Rob would rise again. I pictured the glorious beams of celestial light streaming through great clouds of dust and element as spirits claimed their immortal bodies. I felt new hope.

Soon after, my mind returned to the crowd that was now beginning to leave. "Wait! It's too soon!", I felt. I wanted to stop the world from going on. I felt empty and longed for Robert. I missed his smile, his singing, and his love. Why did the Lord allow this or cause this to happen? How long before we would see him again? Would life go on as if this had never happened?



As we left the cemetery, it seemed the world had already forgotten him. Time would not stand still--not for Rob, not for anyone. Life must go on; at least for the rest of us.

For years since his death we have met as a family at the cemetery to remember him, to ponder about life, and to pray as a family. Grandchildren now run and play whenever we visit. We tell them about their Uncle Robert, who he was, how much we loved him, and how he died.

Yet we often forget to pass on the sorrow we passed through in losing Rob. Perhaps because that sorrow has changed into something beautiful over time. The caverns of sorrow that were carved out of our hearts when Rob died now hold the very reservoirs of joy, hope, and faith in the atonement and in the eternity of our family.

The memories we have of Rob, of his life and of his death, will one day be the source of a joyous reunion beyond the veil--the next time we meet Robert.

## The Sharing

I shared the sorrow of my soul with you today  
Your heart wept silently beside me in my grief

I grasped your hand and felt the spirit's warmth  
Send radiating hope and tears release

A flood of love for you, my precious friend  
You understand...you understand the deepest part

A bond of love has blossomed in this span  
Through mingled tears bloom flowers of the heart.

*by Nola Peterson Neeley*

