

Dear Reader,

As you become a friend and get to know me better as a writer, I would like to tell you a little about myself. I see my life divided into two spheres. The first half of my life began in the spring of 1951 and ended on a cold wintry day in January 2007. I say it ended, not like death that comes calling once and you are no longer in this world, but instead because of the changes in my heart and soul after that time. I was no longer whole and God had to carry me for many days because I could not face life with a piece of my heart missing forever.

Much occurred before that time to make me the person others wanted to follow. I had many titles and performed admirably during the first half of my life both professionally and personally. Climbing the career ladder and securing each new position in the field of education, gave me confidence and created a pattern of success. I began as an elementary school teacher and progressed through the ranks with new titles and positions: principal, director, and ultimately district superintendent. As the years passed and my positions changed so did my titles. I completed graduate school and eventually could add the distinguished 'Doctor' in front of my name or use a string of initials behind my name: BS, MAT, Ed.S. and Ed. D.

My parents had about given up on the idea of marriage for me. Even though I was only thirty-five and very successful in my career, they reminded me periodically that my life was not complete without a husband and children. Much to everyone's delight, I found the man of my dreams and married him. My title changed again to Mrs. but most people just referred to me as Dr. Glynn. I was so proud of my career and titles and being married to a dynamic individual.

Several years passed and I eventually became pregnant with my first son, Douglas. I begged for a second child and had my son, Rob, eighteen months later and one week before my fortieth birthday. I shifted gears easily and my family life quickly took on as much importance as my career. As I reflect on the years when my sons were little, I recall vivid memories of vacations at Disney World, ski trips to Vail, summers at the beach house and family gatherings at Grandma and Grandpa's home.

The early years flew by; then I found my sons had become teenagers. Doug loved sports, fast cars, money and lots of friends around him. Rob gravitated towards drama, art and his heavy metal band. In addition to my regular full time job, I started to teach graduate students online from my old alma mater. My husband was promoted to a powerful leadership position at the Texas Education Agency. Life was really good for our family and I felt truly blessed.

Then without any warning, my world and my life as I had known it for fifty-six years changed forever. My son Doug did not wake up. The autopsy report said that Doug died from Pulmonary Edema. God had come for him in the night and I had no forewarning. My last words to him that night before I went to bed were, "I love you. Try to get some sleep and your cold should be better in the morning."

I was so devastated when my son died that I had trouble doing the simple things: getting dressed, eating, and even breathing zapped my energy. Focusing on any detail or sticking to any schedule was not to my liking. I just wanted to crawl up in a fetal position

and sleep forever. I had no interest in life outside of my home and I began to cling to my son and husband as if they were my only life support. I begged Ray to wake me up and help me rid these demons from my soul. I wanted the nightmare to stop. I promised God that if he would give my son back to me, I would gladly stay in a coma forever. I begged him to return my son to being the vivacious, articulate, handsome boy I had before. I was drowning in a sea of despair.

After trying to return to work and finding I could not focus or function around people, I resigned and limped back to the safety of my home. Finally, after crying for days on end, surviving the funeral, and being at home for weeks alone while Rob and Ray returned to their routines, I decided to pick up my pencil and write. I started to write all of my raw feelings down. Much to my amazement, time seemed to pass quicker and I found myself crying less. I could go a whole morning without crying if I was concentrating on my writing. The writing was helping me heal. I began to carry-on quiet conversations with God and I even found myself talking to Doug. It was as if God was leading me out of a dark valley of loneliness and despair. I found I could not stop writing about my loss and the strange emotions that infiltrated my soul. I felt God's presence and a small spark of hope entered my being.

My husband supported me as I researched how to self-publish my writings. I contracted with iUniverse and my labor of love titled, *Shattered Pieces of My Heart*, was published last December. My book is bittersweet. If I think of it as a love story about a mother for her son and as a piece of writing that may help another grieving parent face the confusion, disbelief, turmoil, and the pain of a child's death, than I am proud that I have captured my raw emotions forevermore. In addition, it helped me forge a narrow path leading to the second half of my life with a piece of my heart gone forever.

It has been just a year and two months since Doug died. I find myself writing everyday and I have started a second novel—fiction this time. I want to learn all I can about professional writing. I do not want to return to work outside my home again and get caught up in the fast paced life of full-time work. Fortunately, my husband's salary covers the cost of our living expenses. It is amazing to me that my family, my online teaching, and my writing are enough for me now.

I have learned to place my life in God's hands and to follow His plan, not mine. I start and end each day with prayer and ask God for His many blessings. Doug's death taught me many things. One of the most important things I learned is that we only have the day that we are living. No one is promised tomorrow.

The last half of my life will be spent worshiping God, loving my family, and writing stories that have messages written by my hands but directed by God. It is only through His love and His plan for me that I have found the joy of being able to place my thoughts into words and share them with mankind.

Sincerely,

Marsha Glynn