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From The Swing Bridge



There were two beautiful sisters, not long ago, my mother had said, who fell into the water from the swing bridge and drowned, drowned and drowned.

'Never go on the swing bridge, do you hear', she said. 'Never go on the bridge.'

She stood with me on the high verandah of our holiday house looking down at the sea and at the river where it lustily joins the sea.

I went along the swing bridge, reeling, two steps forward and one step back, clutching cables, one side then the other. Half way across I looked straight down into the water. I stared long and hard, mesmerized by what I saw, deep down. I saw those two little sisters. They were there. They played, waving streamers, chasing each other around the rocks, all in graceful slow motion. I watched as their pale dresses moved to the rhythm of the water, thin folds of muslin clinging then moving from their bodies, wrapping them then winding away. Their dark hair flowed in its own gentle ballet. They pointed up at me, whispered, waved and laughed. Their faces were cheeky and their eyes sparkled.

We watched each other until they turned away and embraced each other. The water darkened and they were gone. They didn't need me.

That was a long time ago and now I am repeating that walk over that same swing bridge. My golden son is six years old and he and I together are doing an ungainly polka with the sway of the span. I hold his strong little hand. He stops clattering his spade along the cable and now, in the middle, he is lying across the bridge's width and is looking deep down into the water. I am lying next to him enjoying this precious moment, creating a memory.

'Look down Mum. Look down there. Can you see?' 'See what?' I say as I squint. 'See! There's children playing under the water. Look, on the rocks.' I tell him that I had often seen them when I was a small girl, but since I grew older they seemed to have disappeared. 'What's the matter with you Mum? Have you got worn out eyes or something? Look harder. They're making funny faces at us. Can't you see their big eyes?'

I say I cannot but that I believe he can. Now we are walking on across the bridge. 'Do you think I have supersonic eyes?' he asks. 'Yeah, absolutely supersonic, something special', I reply. I have more to say to him, but instead I say, 'Let's go get an ice-cream.'

We hold hands as we cross the busy road.

Judy Dowling

Memories of my 'supersonic' son

TCF Vic Aust.

A New Normal

I wanted my life to return to normal.
Then I realized what I wanted
was for my life to return to what it once was.

A year ago I found hope one night
when I heard my wife and my
youngest son laughing in our bedroom.
I thought my life was returning to normal.

I played cards with our youngest son after supper,
with much fun and laughter.
After a few cartoons,
he and my wife were off to bed.

It was then that I realized
my life was not returning
to the normal that it was
when Greg was alive,
but changing to a new normal.

I cannot return to what I once was,
because all of the parts are
no longer there.

I have the choice, consciously,
and subconsciously
to carry on with my life,
thus creating a new normal.

Hope lies in accepting what you now have,
looking with joy, not sorrow,
looking ahead with optimism,
not pessimism.

Daryl Hutso
TCF Atlanta USA



I walked into the garden
where memories forever stay.
My outstretched hand
held your ashes,
I knew it had to be today.

I felt you all around me,
your strong voice I could hear
that this is what you wanted
and I should feel no fear.
The breeze came towards me,
it carried you away.

Now I stand in silence
wondering every day.
Are you the oak tree that I see
or the lovely flower growing free?

Monica E. Drury
loving mother of Gaynor
TCF Vic Aust.