

How We Survive

Sometimes,
if we are fortunate,
we are given a warning.

If not,
there is only the sudden horror,
the wrench of being torn apart;
of being reminded
that nothing is permanent,
not even the ones we love,
the ones our lives revolve around.

Life is a fragile affair.
We are all dancing
on the edge of a precipice,
a dizzying cliff so high
we can't see the bottom.

One by one,
we lose those we love most
into the dark ravine.

So we must cherish them
without reservation.
Now.
Today.
This minute.
We will lose them
or they will lose us
someday.
This is certain.
There is no time for bickering.
And their loss
will leave a great pit in our hearts;
a pit we struggle to avoid
during the day
and fall into at night.

Some,
unable to accept this loss,
unable to determine
the worth of life without them,
jump into that black pit
spiritually or physically,

hoping to find them there.

And some survive
the shock,
the denial,
the horror,
the bargaining,
the barren, empty aching,
the unanswered prayers,
the sleepless nights
when their breath is crushed
under the weight of silence
and all that it means.

Somehow, some survive all that and,
like a flower opening after a storm,
they slowly begin to remember
the one they lost
in a different way...

The laughter,
the irrepressible spirit,
the generous heart,
the way their smile made them feel,
the encouragement they gave
even as their own dreams were dying.

And in time, they fill the pit
with other memories
the only memories that really matter.

We will still cry.
We will always cry.
But with loving reflection
more than hopeless longing.

And that is how we survive.
That is how the story should end.
That is how they would want it to be.

by Mark Rickerby