

Compassion

Written by Death-Row Prisoners

HELPING PRISONERS ON DEATH ROW LIVE CONNECTED AND FRUITFUL LIVES

P.O. BOX 623 | PERRYSBURG, OH 43552

JANUARY 2022 | VOL. 28 | ISSUE 130 (BI-MONTHLY)

Publishing compassionate and introspective articles written by death-row prisoners.



IN THIS ISSUE:

EDITORIAL: FRESH PERSPECTIVES

LWOP EDITORIAL:
A MUSICAL INTERLUDE

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

VISIONS

FEELINGS

WHAT A LIFER LOOKS LIKE

VICTIMS VOICE

WALKING SERMON

IF I HAD WINGS

THROUGH DA' STRUGGLE

MY WORLD

TRUE SIGHT

SEASONS

AND MORE...

www.compassionondeathrow.net

HIS VOICE

There is a voice that speaks louder than the pain, one that can crush the guilt of shame! Words so strong they can and will light flame in your heart to take away the emptiness and hate and replace it with a love filled for a purpose so unique it's only for you...That's right, YOU.

As in only for you that shows you how special you truly are to the words. So, you may feel buried beneath the shadows (sins) and looking up from a grave of failures, but know that Jesus told His disciples in John 6:37, "that all who would come to Him, He would by no means cast away!" All you gotta do is ask Jesus to help and heal your brokenness as He did to the ten lepers in Luke 17:11-19 who lifted up their voices for mercy in verse 14. He cleansed them as they went about their life.

So too, those same words can help you come away clean and new because when you put your faith and belief in Him you now have the kingdom of God inside you (Luke 17:20) and if the kingdom of God is in you, there's no pain, no more anguish of heart from failures and defeats, no more hate, no more

unforgiveness. There's only Love, Peace, Joy and Goodness that flow out of your body. Notice I said body; that's because we must put on the Lord Jesus Christ, (Romans 13:14).

And when you put on Jesus there come triumphs and victories in all the struggles! Yes, there will come troubles and you will stumble, but these things don't take away your new identity and worth! So shut out the fears and close the door on the voices that lie to you. Your value, competence and favor do not come and go based on your circumstances or the opinions of others. You belong to a king now, so look up, oh cast down eyes, and know there's a better tomorrow. All you have to do is ask Him (Matthew 7:7-8).

God bless you all.



Steven Long
Texas Death Row
Livingston, TX

ANOTHER DAY

Weather beaten, collecting dust, turning to rust.
Life can seem like an empty shelf,
sometimes when you're all by yourself,
trodding along on this seemingly endless plight:
earthly tomorrows no longer feel shiny and bright.

So, to avoid being taken in by
overwhelming despair,
you've got to stay in constant prayer.
It's a daily battlefield, (trying) to hold on to
what's real.

You ask, "will today be filled with confusion?
OR...
Just another realm of illusions?"
Surely, it can't **all** be a delusion.



Al Harden
North Carolina Death Row
Raleigh, NC

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor are welcomed from all prisoners (this includes non-death row prisoners) and the outside community.

In submitting letters, we ask that compassionate and introspective guidelines apply to your communications.

Limit size to 400 words or less. Letters may be edited for clarity and space considerations.

SEND ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO:

COMPASSION OFFICE
P.O. Box 623
Perrysburg, OH 43552

COMPASSION OUTSIDE COORDINATOR

compassiondeathrow@msn.com
TEL: 419-874-1333
FAX: 419-874-3441

WEBSITE ADDRESS:

www.compassiondeathrow.net

PUBLISHER

Compassion

EDITOR

George Wilkerson

ASSISTANT EDITORS

Konstantinos Fotopoulos

Kevin Marinelli

Phillip Vance Smith II

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Tony Bartsdale, Herbert T. Beard, Jr.,
Marcus Druery, Al Harden, Steven Long,
Geoff Martin, Khadafy Mullens
and John Robinson

PLEASE NOTE: Any opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individuals writing them and not of Compassion or other staff members. Anything death row prisoners write may jeopardize their future appeals. This may limit the scope of their expressions.

All stories are subject to editing for grammar, sentence structure, and clarity.

EDITORIAL: FRESH PERSPECTIVES

It's another new year. New years in prison often bring back a lot of memories and can trigger introspection – prompt us to evaluate the course of our lives. When harnessed, this can lead to deeper self-awareness...and for writers, inspiration for poetry, essays, memoirs, articles, etc.

I want to help you maximize this, so here is a list of specific directions to go in, areas that you can explore. The answers to these questions can become the heart of your writings; give you fresh insight into who you are and what you're about; help put your life into perspective:

- What are the most important things in your life and why?
- Do you battle loneliness? What does 'loneliness' mean to you?
- What role does the media play in your life?
- Talk about a time where you could've prevented something bad from happening but did not stop it, or if you did, speak about that.
- Going back to childhood, do you think there were things people could've said or done (or not said or not done) to have changed the person you became, whether good or bad? How important are those outside influences?
- Ideas have consequences. What ideas and values did you accept that informed your attitudes/behaviors? For example, "all disrespect must be punished" is a common idea prisoners hold – and it has consequences.
- How have your goals/dreams changed compared to before your incarceration? Do you even set goals now and if so, what sort? How do you achieve them?

- What are things you've learned that you feel make you a better person?
- How has your view of people in general, changed as you've aged? Do you hold a positive or negative view?
- If you could go back in time, knowing what you know now, how would you create your new life? Are there changes you could actually make now but don't because you feel it's "too late?" Do you believe positive changes should be conditioned on your environment/circumstances or because of who you are and who you choose to be?
- What is your relationship to money like? How does it differ from before your incarceration?
- If you're religious/spiritual, what are some PRACTICAL ways your faith helps you on a regular basis and how would situations turn out had it not been for your faith?
- Do you try to keep your body/mind healthy? If so, how?
- How do your social interactions affect you daily? What would need to change to make that effect more positive? How do you use social interactions to create positive change?

Feel free to write about these topics and share them with us!



George Wilkerson
Editor
North Carolina Death Row
Raleigh, NC

LWOP EDITORIAL: A MUSICAL INTERLUDE

When North Carolina gave us access to GTL tablets, I complained about the introduction of another business venture to siphon money from our families. I boycotted them for a month or so, until a friend on the street desired to set up a messaging account to communicate. Reluctantly, I agreed and I began using a tablet.

Many guys that I am housed with spent three cents a minute to watch movies all day long. Some mined the ESPN app for stats. Others scrolled through news feeds for hours to catch up on the state of the world. I found no addiction until they downloaded the Stingray Music app.

Stingray is not perfect. It only allows for the search of artists, not songs, but one day I found a 90's hip hop channel and I couldn't turn it off. I laid down and closed my eyes. For the hour that I listened, I was no longer in prison. Some songs unearthed ancient memories that I suppressed long ago: a car ride,

a school dance, a first date. I found myself reciting lyrics as if I had memorized them yesterday.

Despite the cost, I need those moments to remind me that there was a time when life was good. It's easy to become so rooted in the present state of incarceration that I do not laugh at the past or look toward a future of possibility. Music helped me realize how everything changes. Kids no longer wear Cross Color or JNKO brands. Instead of baggy pants, they wear skinny jeans. Life is one long state of constant change.

I don't know if you have tablets in your institution but if you do, give music a try. It may change your outlook on LWOP.



Phillip Vance Smith II
Assistant Editor
Nash Correctional Institution
Nashville, NC

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: PROVERBS TO THINK ABOUT

We may give without loving, but we cannot love without giving.

Let us be the first to give a friendly sign, to nod first, smile first, speak first and if necessary.... forgive first.

The light of friendship is like the light of phosphorus, seen when all around is dark.

If we would keep the blessings from above then we must share; ceasing to give, we cease to have – such is the law of love.

If a single man achieves the highest kind of love, it will be sufficient to neutralize the hate of millions.

Love cannot be wasted: it makes no difference where it is bestowed, it always brings in BIG returns.

God pardons, like a mother who kisses the offense into everlasting forgetfulness.

To handle yourself, use your head...To handle others, use your heart.

Measure your life by loss instead of gain: not by the wine drunk but in the wine poured forth, for love's strength stands in love's sacrifice; and who suffers most has most to give.

Are you lonely, O my brother? Share your little with another! Stretch a hand to one unfriended and your loneliness is ended.

Creation of woman from the rib of man; was not made of his head to top him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected and near his heart to be beloved.

A long life is barely enough time for a man and woman to understand each other and to be understood is to love. The man who understands one woman is qualified to understand pretty well everything.

God regards the greatness of love that prompts the man, rather than the greatness of his achievement.

He that cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass, for every man has need to be forgiven.

Forgiveness is the fragrance the violet sheds on the heel that crushed it.

Love is the passionate and abiding desire on the part of two or more – to produce together conditions under which each can be and spontaneously express his real self; to produce together an intellectual soil and an emotional climate in which each can flourish, far superior to what either could achieve alone.

One reason why a dog is such a lovable creature is because it wags it's tail instead of it's tongue.

Some people give and forgive; others get and forget. If you had to do it over, would you fall in love with yourself again?

A woman worries about the future until she gets a husband while a man never worries about the future until he gets a wife.



Shari Eggum
Crain Unit
Gatesville, TX

LWOP

VISIONS

When you're not on drugs, you'll have clear visions.

When you have a clear vision, you'll make the right decisions.

Life is what you make it, it'll be either fact or fiction.

Stop dreaming, get up and go get it.

Ray Charles couldn't see, but he was still optimistic.

Adam and Eve still committed the forbidden.

Take time and write it down before you forget it.

Out of sight, out of mind means you were never in their visions!



Herbert T. Beard, Jr.
Trumbull Correctional Institution
Leavittsburg, OH

FEELINGS

A feeling

is more than a thought

or a mere memory of

some emotional struggle
once fought

we say we care

but to feel it takes a double-dare

or an occurrence that's rare

like Obama-Care

or half price on gas

when inflation flares

our feelings are not a snare

they're there

to make us aware

of all that we are

so stop dealing with them

from afar

and hiding from an old scar

and damn sure won't find them

some late night in a bar

if you want love, then get behind
the wheel

I'll be the car

together we can go anywhere!

But apart, we go

Nowhere...



Tony Bartsdale
Alabama Death Row
Atmore, AL

WHAT A LIFER LOOKS LIKE

It happens all the time. During conversation someone asks, “How much time you got?” When I tell them I’ve got a life sentence, the reaction follows a similar pattern: a slow head nod followed by a quick, deferential apology and then they’ll say, “But you don’t look like someone with life.” I usually just laugh this off and move the conversation along – no harm, no foul. But it’s an interesting statement that makes me ask the obvious question, what’s someone with a life sentence supposed to look like? Incarcerated people are commonly stereotyped as being poor, minority, uneducated and addicted. Lifers shoulder the additional stigma of being the “worst of the worst” who have done things so bad we must now be forever thrown away from society. These notions are so powerful even many incarcerated accept them, which explains my awkward conversational moments over the years but they are weak

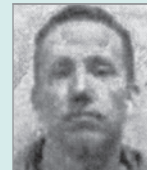
generalizations at best. My twenty-one years of prison experience shatters these stereotypes and negative perceptions.

I’ve met lifers from all walks of life, different races, cultures, religions, social classes and educational levels. I’ve known both college-degreed professionals and blue-collared workers. It’s fair to say that many of these, at some point, have checked one or more of the stereotypical boxes above; however, it’s also important to note that just as many have fought hard to educate themselves, to get clean and sober and to transform themselves into someone completely different from who they were when first entering prison.

I don’t check any of the stereotypical boxes and never have. Prior to incarceration, the only law I’d ever broken was exceeding the speed limit. Life was altogether normal, boring even: decent job, small family, mow

the lawn, a trip to the grocery, tuck in the kids at night – this was my life and my routine. Then I made a terrible mistake and now find myself looking very much like a person with a life sentence.

And that’s about the best answer I can come up with to my original question. Someone with a life sentence doesn’t look like any particular stereotype or negative perception and they won’t fit anyone’s specific boxes or labels. They could be anybody from anywhere. The only thing I can figure we have in common, the thing that makes us “look” like lifers, is that we’ve all made that one terrible mistake. And sadly, that’s all it takes.



Geoff Martin
Nash Correctional Institution
Nashville, NC

VICTIMS VOICE

PEOPLE NEED TO STOP HATING



Heather Heyer

Mark Heyer is the father of Heather Heyer who was killed in a counter-protest against white nationalists after she was struck when a car plowed into the crowd injuring several people and killing Heather. An avowed white supremacist, James Fields Jr. was convicted on hate crime charges and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility parole.

In comments made below, to Florida Today, Mr. Heyer said his daughter fervently believed in the rights of others and that he was proud of her for taking a stand to help others and called on people to “stop the hate.” He added, “She was a strong woman who had passionate opinions about the equality of

everyone and she tried to stand up for that...she had more courage than I did...her activism was part of her life and it wasn’t lip service, it was something she wanted to share with everyone.”

Mr. Heyer feels that people on all sides need to learn to forgive each other, “I include myself in that in forgiving the guy who did this.” He said he thinks about what the Lord said on the cross, “forgive them they don’t know what they’re doing.”

He further hopes that Heather’s death will be a catalyst for positive change. “I hope that her life and what has transpired, changes people’s hearts.”

For more information visit www.mvfh.org

ORIGINAL ART WORK FOR SCHOLARSHIPS



Middletown Morning

By John Sexton 9" x 12" / Acrylic
Florida Death Row \$100.00
Raidford, FL

To purchase make your check to Compassion and send to the address on page 2.

COMPASSION READERS: To date \$58,088.72 has been awarded in college scholarships to family members for murder victims. Make a purchase of their artwork. To view available selections, view Art for Scholarship in the past issues at www.compassionondeathrow.net.

Call 419-874-1333 and ask for Compassion office to verify availability.

WALKING SERMON

Reporters and city officials were gathered at a Chicago railroad station one afternoon in 1953. The person they were meeting was the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize winner. A few minutes after the train came to a stop, a giant of a man – six feet, four inches – with bushy hair and a large mustache stepped from the train. Cameras flashed. City officials approached him with outstretched hands. Various people began telling him how honored they were to meet him. The man politely thanked them and then, looking over their heads, asked if he could be excused for a moment. He quickly walked through the crowd until he reached the side of an elderly black woman who was struggling with two large suitcases. He picked up the bags and with a smile, escorted the woman to a waiting bus. After helping her aboard, he wished her a safe

journey. As he returned to the greeting party he apologized, "Sorry to have kept you waiting!"

The man was Dr Albert Schweitzer, the famous missionary doctor who had spent his life helping the poor in Africa. In response to Schweitzer's action, one member of the reception committee said with great admiration to the reporter standing next to him, "That's the first time I ever saw a walking sermon."

Sometimes the simplest kindness speaks volumes!



John Robinson
Kansas Death Row
El Dorado, Kansas

IF I HAD WINGS

If I had wings
I'd cross the rivers and lakes,
covering acreage by the mile
no matter how long it takes!
Air,
my life giver and mate,
the cold wind beneath my wings –
I shiver, I shape,
I listen to my heart beat
and feel the wind upon my face.

If I had wings
I'd cross oceans and barrier reefs,
I'd be king of the air,
light as a feather,
float like a leaf,
enjoying God's creation –
if I had wings!

Over the mountains,
soaring like eagles do,
although it's your beautiful
friendship I pursue –
I'd be on my way to see you,
if I had wings.



Marcus Druery
Texas Death Row
Livingston, TX

THROUGH DA' STRUGGLE

I'm the spectacular in your eye
when you see achievement and success –
I won't settle for anything less.
I am a master, I am a chief
I am greatness, I am blessed.
I have to remind myself sometimes
I am these things.
Do you believe strong faith in God, prayers and
reading the word would get me rid of them?
Are they demons? Where do they come from?
I'd begun taking psych medication,
once again falling under heavy sedation,
so getting active and moving around,
attempting to block out and ignore
the voices becomes too much of a task....
So, I just lie awake sometimes
listening to them destroy my willpower.
Rather be at Six Flags jumping
on roller coaster rides, loving the thrill desired.
On a Friday night, I retrieved my issue of
Compassion
from the officer handing out mail,
almost bringing a tear of joy to my eye,
knowing I have brothers – black, brow
and white alike –
going through the same thing.
The feeling of not being alone on this journey,
on this quest, uncomplicates things,
rebuilds my self-esteem.
I'm back enjoying the feeling of thriving!
I could never be a crab in a bucket
because I love to see when another
brother is climbing his way up.
Sometimes just a little push is exactly
what we need
to remind us not to give up.
My issue of Compassion strengthened me
and this is compassionately written.
I thank everybody who continuously helps
me through the struggle.
This is dedicated to all the sisters and brothers:
ya'll be blessed and don't let 'em see you sweat.



Khadafy Mullens
Florida Death Row
Raiford, FL

MY WORLD

In my world, there are always voices crying
in the night, people sinking beneath the
loneliness, holding onto the hurt and pain.
They're scared of failure and always being
laughed at and mocked! Now, even I am getting
oppressed by hate, seeing no end of the
despair: yet still I hope to vanquish the seeds of
evil by defying the odds in my world of lost souls
so blind.

In my world, words are so much stronger. In my
world, there's not much room for kindness... But
I have found the overwhelming desire in my head
and heart to let my words build others up and
show someone that chains can be broken.

An old preacher back in the day said, "The Bible
was not given for our information, but for our
TRANSFORMATION." So I tested that quote and
actually found these words to be true. After I read
it, I was one of the few to be transformed within.
For I was transformed by the renewing of the
mind. All my life, I wanted to believe in something
that was "better" in my world, so when I read
Romans 12:1-2, I was truly touched by Paul's
writings and so I worked on my mind because
that is what we must focus on more diligently!



The battle is in the mind... Growing up, we
have all kinds of bad things happen to us and
when there is no help, we're left to deal with
those things from our own mindset and that
mindset is hurt and in agony, but most of all
ANGRY! However, if people would just BELIEVE,
then mountains won't seem so large and
unapproachable. Here's why...Those mountains in
your life can't grow anymore, BUT YOU CAN!!!

God bless you all...

Steven Long
Texas Death Row
Livingston, TX



Please mail your writings to:
COMPASSION
 P.O. BOX 623 | PERRYSBURG, OH 43552



If you want to share someone else's work, please be sure you include the name of the author or its origin.

PRISONERS OF DEATH ROW YOUR ASSISTANCE WILL BE APPRECIATED

7 SUGGESTIONS AND GUIDELINES

1. Write about an experience that impacted you.
2. It doesn't have to be religious. Here are some themes: anger, apathy, beauty, betrayal, boredom, change, complacency, courage, fear, friendship, growing older, jealousy, pride, purpose, vices, and wisdom.
3. Use sensory details – the smell, who said what, its color, how cold it felt. Sensory details connect your experience to your readers.
4. There's no need to use big words when a simpler one suffices: leave your ego at the door with your case: this isn't the place for either one.
5. Look for ways to unify; help; and solve problems.
6. Be authentic. Be yourself. No one's perfect.
7. Try to limit it to 400 words or less, and if possible enclose a photo of yourself.

As there are numerous submissions it may take up to eight months for selected articles to be published.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS WHO ARE MAKING THIS PUBLICATION POSSIBLE

LEAD DONOR

(\$5000 OR MORE):

In Memory of Margaret Keller

SILVER DONORS

(\$1000 OR MORE):

St. Rose Parish, Perrysburg, OH

Rev. Charles Ritter

In Memory of Deacon

Ken Cappelletty

Cynthia Bily

Fr. Edward Schleiter

BRONZE DONORS

(\$500 OR MORE):

Ken & Elizabeth Green, Dallas, TX

Diocese of San Diego, CA

Rev. Neil Kookoothe,

St. Charence Church

St. Joseph Church, Sylvania, OH

Kathleen & Paul Helbling

Ida Nissen, Melton, FL

Rev. James Bacik

Sisters of Mercy, Fremont, OH

Margaret Buckley

Bishop Thomas Gumbleton

PATRONS (\$100 OR MORE):

An Anonymous Friend

St. Katharine Drexel, Frederick, MD

Sisters of St. Francis, Tiffin, OH

St. Mary's Church, Defiance, OH

Fr. Richard Notter

Ron Hitzler

Rev. Edward Schleiter

Cathy Cappelletty

Norbert Wethington

Rev. Tony Gallagher

St. Bartholomew Church, Columbus, IN

Sister Delores Schuh, CHM

Father Doug Hennessey

Sisters of Mercy, St. Bernardine Home

Tom Perzynski

Catholic Charities, Youngstown, OH

St. Paul's, Norwalk, OH

Leo & Nancy Bistak

Bonnie & Jim Keller

Ann Nichols, Arizonans to Abolish DP

Don & Connie Reinhard

Rev Gerald Chmiel

Mary Jo Pfander

Eddie Kanarowski

Randy & Jacalyn Dawson

Joel Konzen

Marist Society

Father Robert Reinhart

Mary J. Flores

Danny Puccetti

St. John XXIII Catholic Community

Sister Noel Frey

Bishop Mark Rivituso

Joseph Alonge, Weirton, FL

Louise & Michael Sarra, Rossford, OH

Kayla Pincus, Rossford, OH

Thea Barron, Annandale, VA

Sheila Otto, Toledo, OH

Frank Atkinson

Denise S. Szabo

David & Marilyn Gibson

David & Carolee Snyder

Marianne Black

Father John Blaser

Sister Pat Schnapp, R.S.M.

Rev. David Tscherne

Carol Kraus

Hal & Melissa Munger

Jeff & Denise Yeager

Tom & Nancy Kabat

Tom & Martha Ann Weaver

Bruce & Laura Brancheau

Jennifer Hamlin Church

Ed Ireland

Germaine Kirk

Jeff & Deborah Marczak

Mary-Beth Matthews

Carlton & Karen Fraker

Paul Belazis

Kathryn Nelson

Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania

Virginia Froehle

Imran Ali & Umber Ansari

Farhana Habib

Rehana & Naveed Ahmed

Howard & Paulette Stringfellow

Mark Cappelletty

Joe Clark & Mary Dwyer

Eileen Keller

Shelly Kotz

Sisters of Charity, Seaford, NY

Donald & Marsha Kurek

Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena

Rev. Cathleen Burnett

Patricia Bidwell

**Also, Thank You to Our
 Subscribers & Other Donors**

NO DONATION IS TOO SMALL Compassion is sent free to all 2500+ death-row prisoners and 700 of the over 50,000 serving life without parole sentences. We will increase that number as funds become available.

COMPASSION DONATION | PARTICIPATION FORM

A portion of your donation will be given in college scholarships to family members of murdered victims.

- Benefactor – \$10,000
- Lead Donor – \$5,000
- Gold Donor – \$2,500
- Silver Donor – \$1,000
- Bronze Donor – \$500
- Patron – \$100.00 to \$499.00
- Subscriber – \$50.00
- Prisoners Not On Death Row
No charge by individual request.
- Other: _____

Enclosed is \$ _____ for the donation/subscription checked on the left.

Please keep my gift anonymous.

NAME _____

ORGANIZATION _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

DAY PHONE _____ EVENING PHONE _____

Please send tax deductible contribution to:
 ST. ROSE PEACE & JUSTICE / COMPASSION
 P.O. BOX 623 | PERRYSBURG, OH 43552

TRUE SIGHT

Poverty is oppression
can't you see,
the only one you really oppress
is looking at me.
For with your thoughts
of power and greed,
you're the one
who needs to be freed.
With judgmental eye
you gaze at the world,
thinking everything
can be bought or sold.
Little do you know
it's already owned
by whom it was created.
Release your mind
and polluted heart
from all such desires
and make a new start.
Don't see the world
through the eyes of fraud.
See the world through
the eyes of God.



Kevin Marinelli,
Assistant Editor
Pennsylvania Death Row
Waynesburg, PA

Compassion

St. Rose Parish
215 E. Front Street
Perrysburg, Ohio 43551

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
TOLEDO OH
PERMIT NO. 179

Printing and Postage Paid for by: Compassion

SEASONS

A father wanted his four sons to each learn not to judge things too quickly, so he sent each, in turn, on a quest to go and look at an apple tree that was far away. The first son went in winter, the second in spring, the third in summer and the fourth in fall. When all returned, he asked each one to describe what they had seen.

The first son said, "The tree was just empty branches, ugly, bent and twisted." The second son said, "It was covered with green buds, full of promise." The third son said, "The tree was laden with blossoms that smelled so good and looked so beautiful!" The last son disagreed with all of them saying, "It was plump with succulent fruit, full of life and fulfillment."

The father then explained that they were all right because each had seen only one season in the tree's life. He said, "You cannot judge a tree, or a person, by only

one season. The essence of who we are and the pleasure, joy and love that come from that life can only be measured at the end, when all the seasons are fulfilled. If you give up in winter, you miss the promise of your spring, the beauty of your summer and the fulfillment of your fall."

Don't allow the pain of one season to destroy the joy of the rest. Don't judge life by one difficult season. Persevere through the barren and ugly seasons and better times are sure to come, for "this too shall pass." Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly. Trials in life keep you strong, sorrows keep you human, failures keep you humble, success keeps you glowing but only you can keep yourself going!

John Robinson
Kansas Death Row
El Dorado, KS