

WHEN I DIE

When I die, if you need to weep, cry for your brother walking the street beside you
And when you need me, put your arms around anyone,
And give them what you need to give me.

I want to leave you something, something better than words or sounds.
Look for me in the people I've known or loved
And if you cannot give me away, at least let me live in your eyes, and not on your mind.

You can love me most by letting hands touch hands,
By letting bodies touch bodies, and by letting go of children that need to be free.

Love doesn't die. People do. So, when all that's left of me is love, give me away.

GOODBYE OR SEE YOU LATER?

Just for a while I'll miss you and the valley that I tread will be dark and drear
Just for a while I'll miss your cheery face and for a while I'll shed a tear.
Being so human I'll miss you not around, you being you, the things you did and said,
Your voice the dear familiar sound.
Just for a while the sun has lost its glow,
The days endless, pointless so it seems.
The nights the lonely nights filled with your young and happy dreams.
Just for a while I must grieve.
I love you so; how hard it is to let a loved one go.
Yet deep down inside I recognize in God's own time he will let me know:
The time will come when recollections bring a smile and not a tear
Family occasions, happy memories down those short but well-filled years.
For after all even a full life span is fleeting, soon complete
It is only just for a while, and then we meet.

FIRST IT MUST DIE Have you ever stopped to notice the many parts of a flower? [Remove a flower from the wreath on the casket.] A flower has roots and a stem, leaves and petals. But did you know that the real life of a flower is found right here in the center of the flower -- in what is called the stigma and stamen. It is from these two parts of the flower that new seeds are produced?

But, in order for a flower to reproduce, for it to come to life again, it must first die. Only when a flower dies does its seeds fall to the ground and a later spring brings it once more to life. Without death then, there is no life.

Now that illustration also applies to the life of the Christian. Indeed, on this earth we do see some of the beauty which blossoms when the Christian allows Jesus Christ to live and work in his/her heart and life. But it is not until we die that our full beauty and glory emerges.

It is only in death and through death that we finally become what God has created us to be. Without death, there is no eternal life.

At this time I want to invite all the children and grandchildren to take one of the flowers from the wreath on the casket as a way of being reminded that death, for the Christian, is not an end. It is rather the continuation of the process of life, the passing from one phase of life into another -- an even more glorious reality than that which we experience on this earth.