

KNOCKING ON HEAVEN'S DOOR

By John F. Hall

My two friends in Michigan, Audrey and Michael Lambert, suffered a loss yesterday. Audrey's younger brother, Joe Nelson Denny passed away. In a picture, Joe looks a lot



like Audrey. I never met Joe or his parents, Tim and Geraldine (Loftis) Denny. But those of us who have lost a brother know of the grief, the pain, and the sorrow, that does not go away. Only time helps us cope. But, sometimes, seeing our brother's picture, or a song from the day that he passed away, helps keep the memory of our brother alive. Joe is four years older than my son, John Andrew. Our society does not prepare us to deal with death. Audrey has been down that grief road before with the passing of another brother, Ronald T. Denny. I believe that as long as we keep speaking about our loved ones, that have died, they remain alive to us.



(Pictured Joe Nelson Denny (1963-2023).)

Anthony Newley wrote a song called, "And The Heaven's Cried," People have different ways to express grief over the loss of love or the loss of a loved one. These are Anthony Newley's lyrics: "She was mine only yesterday, both our hearts beat as one. But then I felt her slip away, as the clouds stole the sun. And the heaven's cried, and the tears filled the stream, and the stream filled the river; the river filled the sea, all because she took her love away from me. Though each dawn brings the sun again, yesterday will remain a hoh-hoh. Everyday I'll remember when the clouds filled with rain. And the heaven's cried, and the tears filled the stream, and the stream filled the river; the river filled the sea, all because she took her love away from me."



Pictured: Ronald Timothy Denny (1950-2004).

It seems that I've been knocking on Heaven's door, as recently as March 2nd. But I didn't have a key to get in. Linda Winchell wrote the poem, "Knocking on Heaven's Door." These are her words: "I went knocking on Heaven's door today but no one came to the door to see. Who was making all that knocking noise for it was just, little old me! I guess they might all still be sleeping? Or maybe out shopping, at heaven's Grocery store?"



(Pictured: Charles J. Hall Jr. (1937-1966). He was killed by a hit and run driver when he was only 29. they never caught that driver.

So I guess I'd better continue just knocking, knocking on Heaven's door? As I gazed in through leaded glass windows of those golden Heaven's door. There on knees was seen an Angel crying! Who cried out, 'God doesn't live here anymore. He went to earth yesterday to fight earth's war, with His Angels you see! And left me here to man Heaven's doors, but I've seemed to have misplaced their keys! I can't seem to let you in

right now, so can you come back, another time? I will let you know if I find the keys later, I'll be sure to send you, an Angel Knee Mail line.”

I wanted this story, as short as it is, to be meaningful to my younger readers. In looking for a poem to end this story, I found one written by Pat Fleming called, “What Life Should Be.” She writes about how we ought to try to live our lives. These are her words: “To learn when still a child what this life is meant to be. To know it goes beyond myself, it's so much more than me. To overcome the tragedies, to survive the hardest times. To face those moments filled with pain, and still manage to be kind. To fight for those who can't themselves, to always share my light, with those who wander in the dark, to love with all my might. To stand up with courage, though standing on my own. To still get up and face each day, even when I feel alone. To try to understand the ones that no one cares to know. And make them feel some value when the world has let them go. To be an anchor, strong and true, that person loyal to the end. To be a constant source of hope to my family and friends. To live a life of decency, to share my heart and soul. To always say I'm sorry when I've harmed both friend and foe. To be proud of whom I've tried to be, and this life I chose to live. To make the most of every day by giving all I have to give. To me that's what life should be, to me that's what it's for. To take what God has given me and make it so much more. To live a life that matters, to be someone of great worth. To love and be loved in return and make my mark on this earth.”

Writing is catharsis for me. Aristotle, in his book, “Poetics,” describes the effects of true tragedy on the spectator. I was 22 years old when my brother was killed by a hit and run driver. So we take Joe and Ronald, and my brother, Charles, who died at the age of 29, and keep them in our hearts. We will see them again, when we knock, knock, at Heaven's door. And Jesus Christ will welcome us, because He knows how much we have cried and suffered, on life's grief road.

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