

The Jeweled Handkerchief

By Ruth Jones



*“God will wipe every tear from their eyes.
There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain,”*

Revelation 21:4

I know that the greatest pleasure and the most exquisite pain this life has offered to me came from a single source: my children. I believe as just as fervently that the greatest Source of perfect comfort and lasting joy is my relationship with God.

My son, Todd, was 18 years old when a midnight traffic accident on a dark Texas road took his life. Since then, God has proven His faithfulness through a myriad of provisions, but the continuing hallmark of His grace has been hummingbird sightings that began on the day before Todd’s funeral. Grief and pain began then, and haunt me still. However, the wondrous experience with the hummers’ majesty and their Maker’s touch also continues, some 20 plus years later.

My daughter, Marie, was a preschooler when her precious brother died. My loss was great, but hers was incalculable - her budding, ultimate best friend was taken from her. Life resumed and our family faced our sad and vulnerable new normal. Marie brought purpose to daily routines, her four-year-old need for nurturing providing the reason to continue on. During those years, I could not have anticipated what lay ahead for her.

When Marie was 17 years old, she began experiencing significant health problems. Several years and many surgeries later, she required a very serious operation and was hospitalized for what seemed like countless days. I lived at the hospital with her, leaving only when absolutely necessary. God reached right down and touched our hearts during one of those trips to a nearby store.

I was at the very end of my proverbial rope as I stepped off the elevator in the beautiful hospital atrium. Towering plants in gigantic pots waved to me as I walked past. Few friends and no relatives had visited us; unending fatigue had become my only companion. I passed the gift-laden stores and the welcome center, wondering where to find the strength to continue ministering to my beautiful almost-adult child who lay suffering several floors above me. I stepped out onto the hospital grounds and the cerulean September sky called me to breathe deeply of the crisp air. Attempting to clear my mind, I looked down and a movement caught my attention.

Our lives were blessed with many hummingbird moments in the years since that first experience with them. Initial sightings the day of calling hours were followed by an increase in the creatures' visibility around our home. I opened the front door and sensed that "something" had been on the red impatiens in the pots, flying quickly away. We welcomed them to our yard, glad that they had come to remind us of God's presence in our grief. Now, so many years later, God inserted one of these jeweled friends into my shopping trip and blessed us once again.

I could not believe what I was seeing as I looked down at the sidewalk just steps away from the busy hospital lobby. Sitting comfortably on the concrete, looking up at me was a tiny hummingbird! Its red throat reflected the sunlight; its eyes were clear and bright. If I had not looked down at the precise moment I did, I would have missed this God-moment. I sat down on a nearby bench; my feathered friend and I continued to enjoy one another's company. Passers-by joined in occasionally, participating in the wonder of the moment, but unable to fully appreciate its import. I'm not sure how long we were there, but after a time, the tiny bird flew off. I rose to go, refreshed and encouraged.

This jewel-encrusted tool in God's hand magnificently wiped away my tears and fatigue as surely as a cloth would have done. I do look forward to the time when even the pain that caused the tears will also disappear. For now, though, the memory of God's jeweled handkerchief serves as a lovely reminder of His gentle, unexpected, healing touches as we continue on our way.