

Walk Within You

("The Smoke Jumper" - Nicholas Evans)

If I be the first of us to die,
Let grief not long blacken your sky.
Be bold yet modest in your grieving.
There is a change but not a leaving.
For just as death is part of life,
The dead live on forever in the living.
And all the gathered riches of our journey,
The moments shared, the mysteries explored,
The steady layering of intimacy stored,
The things that made us laugh or weep or sing,
The joy of sunlit snow or first unfurling of the spring,
The wordless language of look or touch,
The knowing.

Each giving and each taking.
These are not flowers that fade,
Nor trees that fall and crumble,
Nor are they stone,
For even stone cannot the wind and rain withstand,
And mighty mountain peaks in time reduce to sand.
What we were, we are,
What we had, we have.
A conjoined past imperishably present.

So when you walk the woods where once we walked together,
And scan in vain the dappled bank beside you for my shadow,
Or pause where we always did upon the hill to gaze across the land,
And spotting something, reach by habit for my hand,
And finding none, feel sorrow start to steel upon you,
Be still.
Close your eyes.
Breathe.
Listen for my footfall in your heart.
I am not gone but merely walk within you.

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