



# M.I.S.S.ing Angels

A publication of the M.I.S.S. Foundation: a non-profit organization

A Sanctuary for Bereaved Families

July/August, 2005

Volume 9, Issue 4

## Living Without

By: Anna Kennedy

I have had to learn to live without. I live without my son on a day-to-day basis. Sometimes a minute-to-minute basis because the pain of without is so acute I can hardly breathe. I live without the milestones. No first steps. No first words. No first temper-tantrum. No first time out. No favorite foods. No favorite color, person, place or thing. Nothing. I live without. I will never have the memories of the first day of school. I live without the Yu-Gi-Oh Card obsession I looked forward to dreading. I live without the wonderful and I live without the frustrations that



come with motherhood. I simply live without.

I am painfully aware of the hole left between my two living children. Their age difference is a constant reminder of what should be in the middle. I am painfully

aware of all the things I will never get to experience with Jared, of the memories that will never be. I will not get the chance to yell his name down the street, "Jared Michael!" in an effort to call him home for dinner. I do not get the chance to apologize for the fact that I have just embarrassed him in front of his friends by using his

*continued on page 7*

"There is no 'answer' to the riddle of grief. But if one person, alone, cannot hold up under the crushing weight of loss, the heaviest burden can be lifted, or at least lightened, when it is shared."

~ Johann Christoph Arnold

### ♥ Inside this issue: ♥

<i>Gift of Life</i>	2
<i>Lilyfish</i>	3
<i>Jizo - A Guardian</i>	5
<i>MISSing Angels Bill</i>	6
<i>A Lifetime</i>	7
<i>Kids Korner</i>	8
<i>Dwelling vs. Remembering</i>	9
<i>Baby's Breath</i>	11
<i>Children's Memorials</i>	12
<i>Donations</i>	14
<i>Why?</i>	15
<i>Announcements</i>	18
<i>Mailbox</i>	19
<i>Recent Losses</i>	21
<i>International Contacts</i>	21
<i>MISS Chapters &amp; Contacts</i>	22
<i>Newsletter Submissions</i>	24

### Take Note:

• See page 18 for details on... the 5th Annual Children's Memorial MISS Foundation Golf Tournament!



# ~ Gift of Life ~

By Karen Loomis

July 3, 1999—it seems so far away and yet it seems like it was just yesterday. It is hard to believe that it has been six years since our precious baby girl was born and, sadly, died. Much has changed in the past 6 years. We now have 5 daughters. There are four here on earth with us and one watching over us from Heaven.

We are kept very busy with all of them. We run between school programs, dance recitals, plays, and more for the four that we can touch. Our angel keeps us just as busy with 2 support groups, assisting parents in grief at the local hospital where our daughters were all born and promoting organ donation.

When Maclaine died in 1999, we thought that was the end of her story. But, just like our other girls, she likes to keep us on our toes. In the years since she became a part of our family, we have traveled to Disney World (2002 US Transplant Games), Washington D.C. (2003 National Donor Recognition Ceremony and Workshops), and Tennessee for a get-together with Sammy, our daughter's heart recipient, and his family.

All this travel was because she was able to give the **Gift of Life** to another baby that was waiting to go home. Our family was enlarged, not by one newborn, but by two newborns, a toddler and two adults. The family of our daughter's heart recipient has become like an extension of our family. I know that everyone's story of organ donation does not

have the same happy ending that ours has, but I am so glad that one family did not have to endure the tragedy that we did.

Sending our precious angel to surgery was definitely not the plan that we had, but God had a bigger plan in mind. It amazes us how frequently her story is able to touch someone, even six years later. Of course it helps that we wear buttons every day

with Maclaine's picture and Sammy's picture to promote organ donation. But, another important reason is that we do not want people to forget her. We want them to think of her just as quickly as they do our earthly children: Maegan, Katelynn, Sarah, and Jessica.

'Claine, you are my forever baby!! I love you!!

Mommy  
[www.clainescorner.com](http://www.clainescorner.com)



*In Loving Memory of  
Maclaine Elise Loomis  
July 3-6, 1999*

# ~ Lilyfish ~

by Bill Heavey, Editor/Author *FS Magazine*

Permission to Reprint Granted by Time Warner & Field & Stream Magazine, July 2000 – pp 72-73

After the world takes an eggbeater to your soul, you never know what's going to get you up and back among the living. In my case, it was the ham. It was 3:30 on a sweltering July afternoon, three weeks to the hour since my new baby daughter lay down for a nap and woke up on the other side of this life.

I decided it was time to go fishing. There were any number of good reasons. For one, I could still smell Lily's baby sweetness in the corners of the house, still feel her small heft in the hollow of my shoulder. For another, I'd hardly left the house since she died and had taken to working my way through an alarming amount of dark rum and tonic each night, not a sustainable grief management technique over the long haul. Jane and I had planted the memorial pink crepe myrtle and the yellow lilies, chosen for having the audacity to bloom in the heat of the summer, the very time Lily died.

But it was the ham that got me off the dime. After the funeral, the neighbors had started bringing over hogs' hind legs as if the baby might rise from the dead and stop by for a sandwich if they could just get enough cured pork in the refrigerator. I knew my mind wasn't quite right, knew I still hadn't even accepted her death. But it seemed like I'd lose it unless I put some distance between me and the ham.

I shoved a small box of lures in a fanny pack, spooled up a spinning rod with 6-pound mono line, and filled a quart bottle with tap water. On my way out the door, I stopped, as I have taken to doing since her death, to touch the tiny blue urn on the mantel. "Baby girl," I said. I stood there for several minutes, feeling the coolness of fired clay and waiting for my eyes to clear again. Then I got in the car and drove 20



miles north of D.C. to the Seneca Breaks on the upper Potomac River.

I didn't particularly care that it was 102 degrees outside. I didn't particularly care that any smallmouth bass not yet parboiled by the worst heat wave in memory would scarcely be biting. I was furious at the world and everything still living in it now that my daughter wasn't. As I drove, the radio reported severe thunderstorms to the west and said they might be moving our way. Fine by me. If someone up there wanted to send a

little electroshock therapy my way, I'd be easy to find.

Even at five o'clock the sun still had its noon fury. The heat had emptied the normally crowded parking lot at the river's edge. I stepped out of the air-conditioned car into the afternoon's slow oven. I slugged down some water, put my long-billed cap on, found a wading stick in the underbrush, and walked into the river. The water was bathtub warm and 2 feet below normal. Seneca Breaks, normally a mile-long series of fishy-looking riffles and rock gardens was, like the only angler fool enough to be out there, a ghost of its former self. At least it didn't smell like ham. But the fish weren't here, and I realized I shouldn't be either. It dawned on me that I'd better get in water that went over my waist or risk heatstroke.

Just upstream from the breaks, the river is called Seneca Lake, 3 miles of deep flats covered with mats of floating grass. I worked my way to the head of the breaks and slipped into this deeper water, casting a 4-inch plastic worm on a light sinker. Soon I'd waded out chin-deep into the lake, holding my rod arm just high enough to keep the reel out of the water. There were baitfish dimpling the surface

*continued on page 4*

continued from page 3

## ~ Lilyfish...continued ~

every so often and dragonflies landing on my wrist, and once a small brown water snake wriggled by so close I could have touched him.

Nothing was hitting my worm, but that was to be expected. My arms seemed to be working the rod on their own, and I was content to let them. I stood heron-still and felt the slow current brush grass against my legs. Every so often, a minnow would pucker up and take a little nip at my exposed leg. It tickled. Baby fish. I remembered how I'd call her Lilyfish sometimes when changing her diaper, remembered how she had loved to be naked and squiggling on the changing table, gazing up at me and gurgling with something approaching rapture as I pulled at her arms and legs to stretch them.

The tears welled up again. I found the melody to an old Pete Townshend song running circles through my head and finally latched onto the chorus:

*After the fire, the fire still burns,  
The heart grows older but never ever learns.*

That's how it was, alright. The fire was gone, but it still burned. It would always burn. The memories—her smell, her smile, the weight of her in my arms—would always smoulder. And I'd always yearn for the one thing I'd never have.

And what struck me as I stood alone in the middle of the river was that while my world had been changed forever, the world itself had not changed a whit. The river simply went about its business. A dead catfish, bloated and colorless, washed serenely past, on its way back down the food chain. The sun hammered down, and a hot wind wandered the water.

I caught a bluegill, then two little smallmouths, within 10 minutes of each other. As I brought the fish to the surface, I had the sensation of bringing creatures from a parallel universe into my own for a minute before sending them darting back home. I wondered if death might be like this, traveling to

a place where you didn't think it was possible to breathe, only to arrive discovering that you could. I hoped it was. The older I get, the more I believe that there is such a thing as the soul, that energy changes form but still retains something it never loses. I hoped that Lily's soul was safe. That she knew how much she was still loved.

I don't know how long I stayed there or even if I kept fishing. I remember looking up at some point and noticing that the light had softened. It was after eight and the sun was finally headed into the trees. And now, just like every summer night for aeons, the birds came out: an osprey flying recon over the shallows 50 feet up; a great blue heron flapping deep and slow, straight toward me out of the fireball, settling atop a rock and locking into hunting stance. And everywhere swallows coming out like twinkling spirits to test who could trace the most intricate patterns in the air, trailing their liquid songs behind them.

Suddenly I wasn't angry anymore. This is the world, I realized for the millionth time, and its unfathomable mystery: always and never the same, composed in roughly equal parts of suffering and wonder, unmoved by either, endlessly rolling away. It was getting dark now, hard to see the stones beneath the water. I waded carefully back to my car, rested the stick by a post for another fisherman to use, changed into dry clothes, and drove home.

Take your grief one day at a time, someone had told me. I hadn't known what he meant at the time, but I did now. This had been a good day. Lily, you are always in my heart.



## Jizo: A Guardian on our Journey

By Katie H. Dean

After moving to Southern California three years ago and entering massage school, I was introduced to Traditional Chinese Medicine: concepts and theories of which I have never comprehended. From there an entire world was opened to me and I began an independent study in Buddhism. I am by no means an expert, but as a peer could at least share with others the basic concepts as we discuss and examine them further and how they pertain to the horrific journey of child-death we find ourselves on.



The most common form of Jizo in Japan today is the Mizuko Jizo. The Mizuko Jizo is often portrayed as a monk with an infant in his arms and another child or two at his feet. And the ceremony is called mizuko kuyo. The word kuyo is composed of two Chinese characters with the literal meaning “to offer” and “to nourish.” The underlying meaning is to offer what is needed to nourish life energy after it is no longer perceptible in the form of a human or occupying a body we can touch. In actual use kuyo refers to a memorial service for

infants who have died either before birth or within the first few years of life.

Jizo is a bodhisattva in Buddhism – a bodhisattva is similar to the Christian concept of a saint. It is believed when a person becomes enlightened, instead of entering Nirvana (Heaven), they choose to remain in the human form on earth until all human suffering has ended. This is a bodhisattva as opposed to a Buddha who enters Nirvana after enlightenment. The Dalai Lama is the 14<sup>th</sup> reincarnation of the bodhisattva Kuan Yin (called Canon or Kannon in Chinese schools of Buddhism), the bodhisattva of compassion.

*An image of the Mizuko Jizo is the central figure on the altar at such a ceremony. Grieving parents may buy a small statue of Mizuko Jizo to place on the family altar or in a cemetery as a memorial for their child (Bays, 37-38).*

As with saints, there are many different bodhisattvas, each with their own “gifts” or “protections.” Jizo is considered to be the protector of travelers, expectant mothers, pilgrims, small children, and children who have died. After originating in India, Jizo was worshipped by the Chinese, Japanese and Korean more so than in India or Tibet. Jizo worship can be traced back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD in China. There are many different aspects of Jizo to be called upon in different situations.

It is my belief that our children have not “died”, their life force still exists and cannot be destroyed. They have simply changed form, or “faces.” I have found this concept comforting since my son died. I remember early on in my grief supporting other grieving mothers by sharing that concept. I would equate the transformation with boiling water: the water changes to steam, which we can no longer see with our eyes, but the water is still present.

The Mizuko Jizo is a tool used to honor and remember that presence. We are saddened by the perceived

*continued on page 6*

continued from page 5

## Jizo: A Guardian on our Journey...continued

By Katie H. Dean

absence of our children, which is clearly understood because we are, after all, still human.

Buddhists are saddened over death as well, but traditionally, the sadness is eventually viewed as unproductive. Asking why is considered “not a good question.” Our child has died: it is what it is. While the core belief is that it was the child’s karma to leave here and be elsewhere so that he may fulfill his karmic destination, even mothers and fathers and siblings who are Buddhists often struggle with emotional sadness and despair. Traditional Buddhists try to trust the divine order of the Universe and know that everything is as it should be. In the duality of the individual, one part being the spiritual or divine and the other part of the individual being very human, there can be a struggle between the two aspects to understand. Yet, many Buddhists resign to the knowledge that their children are not suffering. It is those who miss them who suffer. We can ask why and we will never get an answer that will be good enough, or we can look at the lessons and ask, “what now?”

Jizo is often depicted in monk robes holding a staff with rings on the top in one hand and a wish-fulfilling pearl in the other hand. The rings at the top of the staff are to

alert insects and animals to his presence so he does not inadvertently harm them.

The service may be as elaborate or as simple as one desires. There are no rules or guidelines, no particular chants or routines that must be followed. A service can be performed as often or as little as need be. During some services the participants may create small red bibs, caps, or capes to decorate a Jizo statue with. These clothes are meant to be the garments of lost children and are used by grieving parents to dress the Jizo in the hopes of inducing him to protect their loved ones. The clothes do not have to necessarily be draped over a Jizo statue; they can be hung in a tree, around a pile of large rocks, or even hung on bamboo.

The ceremony is not about the ceremony; it is about the consciousness of the participant, the remembrance and acknowledgment of a spirit who left the earth sooner than we would have liked.

Bays, Jan Chozen. *Jizo Bodhisattva: Modern Healing and Traditional Buddhist Practice*. Tuttle Publishing, 2002.

## UPDATE on MISSING Angels Bill: Across the Country...

### MISSing Angels States - by the numbers (as of 6/6/2005):

12 states currently offer an official, legal document that includes the words Certificate of Birth in the title to the parents of stillborn children. These states are considered ‘MISSing Angels States’. These states are: Arizona, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia and Wisconsin.

Five states currently have pending legislation that, when enacted, will qualify them as ‘MISSing Angels States’. These states are: New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Texas.



Seven states currently offer their citizens a ‘Certificate of Stillbirth’. Although they are both worded very similarly, ‘Certificates of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth’ and ‘Certificates of Stillbirth’ are not the same thing. Legislators, Policy Analysts, and State Health Departments agree, there is a subtle, yet immense difference in the two. The M.I.S.S. Foundation believes that all states should record births as births... whether live or still. Thus, our goal, for those states that offer a ‘Certificate of Stillbirth’, is to change the certificate to a ‘Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth’, which we view as a ‘BIRTH’ certificate.

Please see the state chart at [www.MISSingAngelsBill.org](http://www.MISSingAngelsBill.org) for more detailed information about your state.

## Living Without...Continued

middle name. I have already lived without his kindergarten graduation. His school pictures are conspicuously missing from our family photo album. The tooth fairy will not be visiting our house to claim Jared's teeth. He never got the chance to have any. I live without.

And yet, somehow, I am comforted by the ghost of "what should have been". Oddly enough I find its presence soothing. His is a hallowed existence. Maybe I am holding on, but it sure feels like letting go. I let those "should haves" come and fill that hole, then I let them pass and I move on to the next. Too often there seems to be another something I am missing out on. I should be planning his seventh birthday party. I should be buying gifts and sending out invitations. I should be doing a lot of things as Jared's mother. I should have, could have, would have... had he not died. What I am doing is missing my son. I am living without his physical presence in my life. As Jared's mother I live with the anticipation of missing out on so much. Such as his days in junior high (which were so difficult for me) his first date and driving lessons, prom and graduation. I am living without.

Does it make sense that I find comfort in that hole that Jared has left in my life? Does it make sense that my son died before me? No, not really. None of it makes much sense. Somewhere there is a lesson here in immortality, but I have stopped asking for the answers. I have found comfort where I can. I cannot change things so I accept what I have been given. I have been given a life without Jared. When the pain of it confronts me I call upon grief to guide me through. Bereavement brings with it many cruel lessons; she is a merciless teacher. Among them I have learned to befriend grief and use it as a tool to cope. Also, and undoubtedly most painfully, I have *had to* learn to live with "without."

## A Lifetime

By Fredna Watson  
In Loving Memory of  
**Collin James Watson ~ July 28, 2000**

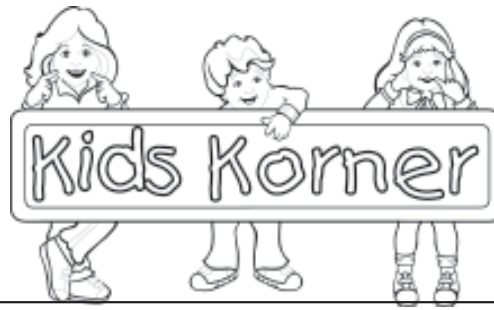
How do you measure a lifetime?  
Most would say it's in years  
The numbers are varied  
For those I have loved  
Sixty-one years and eighty-nine years  
Fourteen years and seventy-six years  
These lives taught me love and humor  
Wisdom and my youth's loss of innocence  
More numbers to count as my life goes on  
At twenty-one years a life stopped abruptly  
On a journey to benefit others  
Sixty-six years and eighty-four years  
Showed courage in spite of the pain  
Disease is so cruel  
Life feels so unfair  
When obstacles mount through the years  
But sixty-nine years and eighty-six years  
Taught love and persistence will win  
One life as a child of sixty-four years  
Brought joy in simplicity each day

A lifetime is measured in so many ways  
In heartbreak and joy; sadness and fear  
In innocence lost and laughter and tears  
The best measure of a life is  
In the gifts it bestowed  
Through courage and love and hope

So how do you measure a lifetime?  
I know you will say it's in years  
And if I must do it in numbers  
This grandmother has this to say  
Eight months, nineteen days,  
One and one-half hours

Of Laughter and Tears and Joy





**"The most honest, truth-telling in this world is done by children."** Oliver Wendall Holmes



My sister Mackenzie...precious, loving, pretty, sweet, born to be an angel left way to soon but what can I do? Nothing but remember my wonderful times we spent together. But why could I not know what was coming my way? I never thought it would happen to me. So I have to say to people that it may happen to you, this is a lesson from somebody who thought it would never happen so never think that.



Happy 4th birthday, Mackenzie Lynn Fitchett, I love and miss you. Love your big sister, Marina Tarango



## Feeling Alone...

I didn't want to admit it  
It was easier to lie,  
And hide all my hurt and emptiness,  
To smile instead of cry.  
I didn't want to face the facts  
That my life was full of pain,  
And I long to stop my bleeding heart  
And maybe even smile again.  
Because I feel oh-so-forgotten  
So betrayed and all alone,  
Without a trace of forgiveness  
And no soul, whatsoever, to call my own.  
I didn't want to admit the fact  
That I can't spread my wings  
All my happiness has melted  
Into tears and many other things!  
Its hard for me to hide  
That my wishes no longer have a home,  
And they return into anguish  
So I bow my head and cry all alone.  
Samantha "Sami" Peters  
Lizzy's Big Sister  
In memory of Elizabeth Peters  
2-12-93 to 5-18-03