

***If You Had Known Our Son, You Wouldn't Have Killed Him***

***By Jane Orydzuk***

***Written on the Tenth Anniversary of Tim's death, October 2004***

***Ten years ago, you killed my son and his friend. You shot them each in the head three times, and you have never been held accountable. Over the years, I thought of you often and wondered what had gone wrong in your life, but you rarely cross my mind anymore.***

***You wouldn't have known the love in our hearts the day our son was born. You couldn't have known the thrill of hearing him say 'mommy' or 'daddy' for the first time, and of seeing him start walking across a room when his tiny legs couldn't sit still any longer. You couldn't have experienced the feelings of joy we had as parents when he built his first birdhouse, or walked to school for the first time, trying to convince us that he was old enough.***

***You weren't looking out the window on rainy days to see him carrying his sisters on his shoulders because they were afraid of the worms. You didn't feel the swell of pride inside of us when he graduated from high school and his life as an adult unfolded. You couldn't possibly have felt the exhilarating excitement when he earned his wings at eighteen and took myself and two of his sisters flying in a small Cessna.***

***You weren't there when he married the love of his life, and a year later presented us with a wee granddaughter who sported a mop of black hair and beautiful oval eyes. You didn't see him cradle his child in his arms and stroke her with his massive hands when she cried, or watch out the window to see him arriving at family gatherings with his little daughter perched high on his shoulders, clutching a fistful of his dark curls in her tiny hands.***

***He was the only son we had. As a child, he spent hours watching his dad building and fixing things, and then he built his own little family a beautiful new home they had just moved into one month before you took his life. He had big dreams for their life in the country – plans that never materialized and dreams that shattered in a heartbeat. You turned those dreams into mourning for all of us.***

***I often wondered if smiles would return to my husband's face, and if the imaginary ton of bricks would life from his chest, giving way to happiness once again. You couldn't possibly have known that nine years later, my husband would join our son on a cold and frosty Christmas Eve, never having recovered from his loss. You will never know how rudely death interrupted our plans of growing old together, and that the only comfort I felt on Christmas Day, as I planned my husband's funeral, was knowing that he and our son were together again in a wonderful place that knows no pain.***

***If you had known our son; if he had touched your life in the gentle and loving ways he touched ours for thirty-three years, you wouldn't have killed him that sad day in October 1994. The memories I'm left with are filled with the sadness you caused us.***

***Will I ever know the freedom you have today, of walking the same streets as my family, or perhaps lurking around the same playgrounds my grandchildren enjoy playing in? Have you ever bounced your baby boy on your knees and promised him the world? Have you ever watched over him as he sawed through his first log on a camping trip, or carved the family name into a piece of driftwood? Have you ever shared his joy when you held his first child?***

***Wouldn't you have loved the chance to say goodbye if you knew you'd never see him again? And how would you have prepared for the pain that followed?***

***Only you will ever know.***