

A Moment with the Salters — Epiphany Sunday 2019

Sally Salter began her report of Emma's death with this quote...

"We need a warrior's heart that lets us face our lives directly, our pains and limitations, our joys and possibilities" (Jack Kornfield)

Today is the third day following Emma's death on January 4th, 2019
when we received the note written by her mother
to let us know the final page of Emma's life with stage 4 melanoma.
Her brother Andrew's Facebook message said exactly what so many feel...

"Yesterday we lost my beloved baby sister Emma...

27 years is not enough time for someone so special. I miss her terribly."

That one message had almost 200 "hits" or "likes" or "hearts" when I last looked...
responses to other messages from the Salters on Facebook
drew similar feelings.

We were gifted by the Salter family (including Emma's grandmother Marilyn)
who have included us in their circle of action and care
showing us what "family" means in real life.

It was a gift to all of us to hear what they faced throughout this turmoil of hopes and fears...
coping with relentless presence of the disease and all treatments and decisions...
so many trips from Idyllwild to Ashland and Portland...and more.

It is better to deal with reports of what *is* than to be left wondering or unaware...
we are grateful for Emma and the whole Salter family for showing us
what a "warrior's heart..." looks like.

Nor is grieving to be hidden away but also faced and shared...
stories and memories and memorials reported...
as friends continue their love.

We have a stone fire pit at our cabin that Ken and the Salter 5 built...
the "Ken Salter Memorial Fire Pit" we call it
remembering that some of his ashes are there.

How many ways will we hear of how Emma's life continues among us?...
what I know is that there will be unexpected times when Emma
will be present in some familiar song or movie or line from a play or memory.

Some of us will realize that we saw love in human form in Emma...
a special light...an epiphany in our midst...
a Salter to the end.

There will always be "the Salter 5" brothers and sisters...
always be "the Salter 7" family...
light shines in the darkness...love never ends.

— Art Morgan, Epiphany Sunday 2019

(A Pastoral Postscript: *I am always hesitant to write this kind of page because I know how it will remind many, many people of personal grief times. It may also renew good and loving memories. My experience is that we never really "get over" such grief. It is part of our history that can't simply be deleted. Most people gradually create new history in which losses are woven into the rest of our life. This always takes longer than we wish. On the grief scale with of a low of 1 to high of 100 a close grief such as Emma's death would be rated at 100. It takes a lot of healing for the light to overcome the darkness.*)