

Summer Blue Sheet 5 August 5, 2013

Morgan's Moment...

I was keeping a promise to my friend...
that I would be present
for the scattering of his ashes.

And so on August 3
we boarded a special train
to his special place in Oregon.



Train arrives at Whitney camp on Wallowa River

30 of Don's family and friends...
including 8 pre-teens
came to spread his ashes on the water.



Art prepares to send group out to spread ashes

Each one took ashes to the river
until his brother Jim
poured the last into the river.



Don's brother Jim with Beth and Colin sharing a final quiet moment after pouring out remaining ashes at confluence of two rivers while the rest of us watched from the river bank.

It was a Moment....

— Art Morgan

A TRAIN RIDE TO DO DON'S ASHES

I suspect most ashes are handled without benefit of clergy. Folks can figure out what they want to do. The options are limitless.

Others find the whole process beyond their experience and welcome a bit of guidance. No two events are the same.

It's a very personal event. It is a time when family and/or friends can be personally involved. I try to make that happen.

It is an event that doesn't need many words. Silence speaks volumes as ashes are placed.

In the event shown here you see a special place, already familiar and special to the family and many of the friends.

There were children present and involved. In this case they were camping over the night before at which time they were told what was going to happen the next day. They had a chance to learn about the ashes and even to touch them.

Since many people have never seen cremated remains I talk about them... "*We are made of the rarest material in the universe...stardust.*" I talk about the bone fragments, some may sink and others float and drift in a cloud. "*They are like crushed sea shells along the shore that once housed living creatures now gone.*"

I ask each one to go alone and be silent as we transport ashes to spots of our choice. "*We will have our own thoughts and feelings. It will be a personal moment.*"

Then I declare these or similar brief words before we go out: "*From stardust we are made, And from the seas we did rise...*

To become living beings.

In reverence for the wondrous gift of life

And thanksgiving for the life and spirit of

Donald Whitney

We return these ashes to waters he loved...

Holy water to him now holy to us

which he knew and fished and found rest for his soul...

To melt together in timeless belonging to nature

from which he came and of which he was a part...

Ashes to ashes, stardust to earth dust, Spirit to Spirit. Amen

I stepped back and watched each one go to the river. Some tears followed the ashes into the moving waters. The river rippling along was the only sound. It was what some call "*a be still and know that I am God*" moment. I suspect you could fill a book with the thoughts and feelings in our minds as we shared that special moment. It is one of those "*moments*" that will be remembered for a life-time by each one of us who was present.

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The train left at 3:00. I confess that Jean and I dozed a bit on the return run. We would sleep in Pendleton that night then drive home on Sunday. We will have driven about 800 miles round trip from our cabin on Puget Sound. I see our sailboat, "Say Yay!" anchored in calm waters. We've done many ash-spreading trips from that boat. But this time we took a train. Say Yay anyway!