

Wounded Holidays

**Dedicated to the Compassionate Friends
and all who are grieving the loss of a child**

Young, they left our homes.
In a moment, long or quick,
they were gone.

Dewdrops turned into teardrops,
the shining sea too small
to hold our grief.

"Give us our children back," we pled
as we noticed their plateless places
at the table.

Regret made a river through our days,
tempering laughter,
pervading sudden silences.

Bodies they had through us, with us--
bodies housing minds and souls--
no longer.

The holiday season's return
makes throb now the wounds
we felt at their parting,

wounds which may heal
in time, we hope,
into strength--

but not yet, in this season
of snowflakes that sting and cookies
that somehow taste of vinegar.

"If only," goes our carol.
If only they could return to us--
but no.

If only
we could speak with them--
but no.

If only we could love them
so intensely that they could
feel our presence right now--

but yes, yes to this one,
a thousand yesses--
they can.

How can they not feel our love,
being core in core with us,
heart in heart?

We give love this season to them and
to each other as plundered parents
and wounded healers.

With love flowing, something in our lives--
a magnificent, mysterious Something--
guides us like a star.

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