



Sascha

Sascha Daniel Frazier
14 July 1997 – 14 February 2000

Before Kendra Frazier moved to Singapore in 2004 with her family, they lived and worked in India. Sascha was the beloved youngest of four children. Their happy lives were shattered when three-year-old Sascha suddenly died, going into shock from the side effects of what seemed like a normal cold. Kendra describes how she has struggled to find meaning in the midst of the agony.

Written by Kendra Frazier, Sascha's mother

To tell Sascha's story would take a lifetime, because it was a lifetime—a short but precious one. And what is “short” or “long” in terms of all eternity? His lifetime was an entire lifetime, just like anyone else's. I knew him from the moment of his conception deep inside me, I witnessed his first breath on planet Earth and held his hand when the last breath escaped his lips, releasing him to other realms. His life touched mine uniquely and profoundly. My life was changed irrevocably when he was born and irrevocably, yet again, when he died. So, when I think of what to say about his life (and mine) I wonder what I can write in just a few words that could do justice to the relationship of a lifetime.

The details of his death, I realise in retrospect, are not as significant as the fact that he lived and that he died. But, at the time, these details consumed my thoughts and energies: he had had a cough for a few days, but was doing better when we put him to bed that night. Later we heard him crying and coughing, and when we went to him he

seemed to be choking on his own phlegm. Apparently a piece of mucus then lodged itself in his lung like a plug, and in that moment his lung collapsed. He went into shock and stopped breathing... It was sudden and unexpected, a simple cold gone wrong, no real explanation, a lack of air, a heart stopped beating, the world came to an end. That's what it felt like: I remember the terror, the horror, the unbearable sorrow and despair that sent me falling into an emotional abyss. I stayed down there a long time, wishing my own breath would fail me and that my own heart would cease its painful beating. Stop! Stop! Stop! I cannot bear this! No parent can bear this! Not this!!!!!!!!!! Not my Sascha!!!!!!

One of the first people I called after Sascha died told me, "He has given you a great gift." For a second, before I plunged back into bottomless depths of sadness, those words spoke to me and made me think. Could losing a child bring anything other than despair? I revisited this question again and again and again over the years and, slowly, with time, I began to understand the inherent wisdom of my friend's words. To witness the birth of a child is a wondrous event, but to view his or her lifeless body (a body one has nurtured and loved unconditionally) is an event of such magnitude that one cannot comprehend it. Or, rather, one can spend a lifetime trying to make sense of it, learning to live with it, discovering new aspects of what it means to spend a little time (whether it's five years or 95 years) doing this thing called "living". A child's death propels you on the journey of a lifetime. You find yourself, against your will, on a path you never knew existed. You make your way in darkness and, somehow, as if by magic, you slowly make your way forward. Dare I believe that Sascha's little hand is pulling me along? Sometimes I can almost hear him whispering in my ear, "Come on Mama, I know you can do this. Yes you can. I love you and I want you to find happiness again. You can do this. You can do it for me. Come on Mama... I want you to be happy." He has the sweetest voice. I listen and I take small gentle steps forward. It takes a looooooong time to learn to trust one's feet again.

You start with teeny-tiny baby steps, just as your child did when he first learned to walk. You learn to wake up again, you learn to buy groceries and run errands, you learn to interact with other people and, one miraculous day, you even learn to laugh again. Then, the fact that you have smiled or laughed horrifies you and you have to take two steps back again before you can proceed again. The path of healing is long and winding and one stumbles most of the way.

When you lose a child, you start from the beginning. Everything you thought was true, you discover is questionable. Things you valued, you realise are meaningless. Things you took for granted you realise are miraculous gifts for which you must be profoundly grateful. You see, for the first time, the shallowness of things. Likewise, you see beauty in mundane things you would have neglected in the past. What is real and what is not are concepts you must reconsider. Your life has been shattered and your spirit annihilated. But, cruelly, your heart still beats. You have no choice but to rise from the ashes. People will call you brave, but the truth is you had no other choice. And since you're forced to stick around, you discover that your perception changes, that your life changes, that you change. In this, you have no choice. It is, if nothing else, a humbling experience.

farewell, my child

I know Sascha loved me and I know he would never have done anything to hurt me. And so, I believe, he must have broken me for a reason. I will spend a lifetime trying to find that reason. I work hard to find positive outcomes. I experience new loves, new motivations, new ways of being; I try to make my life a life worth living. He would have wanted that. He has filled my life with great love and great sorrow and, therefore, also great meaning. The music of my life continues, but the score is immensely richer for having loved and lost a little angel of my heart.

The Saddest Sound

The saddest sound
I ever heard
was the silence
that met my ear
when I rested it
softly on
your sweet chest.

– Kendra Frazier