

## THEY WERE NOT A DREAM

BY ANGELINE SIM

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Today, April 22nd, marks the death anniversary of our second son, Joash Sim, who was born straight into Heaven 7 years ago...This is the first time I am honouring him (and his siblings) on this blog...I reckon if I want to keep it real, I have to share this because this IS a big part of my motherhood journey...

### Background:

We had fertility issues, the husband is fine but I had PCOs (Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome). In the 5th year of our marriage, with the help of assisted fertility and IVF, we conceived a singleton named Nathaniel. In my second trimester, my water-bag ruptured prematurely and I delivered Nat stillborn.

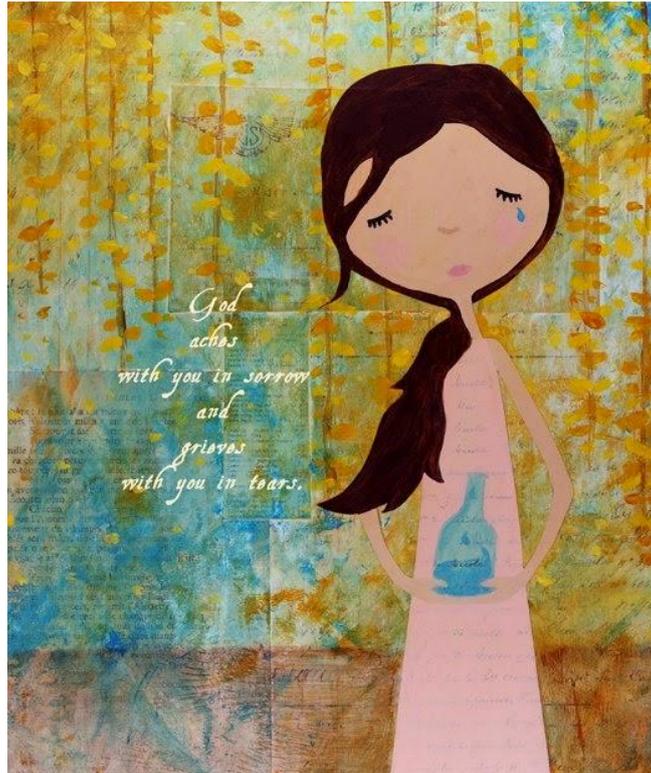
Our second attempt at IVF 3 years later turned out to be boy/girl twins pregnancy – we were over the moon! Things proceeded well and then at just past 21 weeks, I experienced excruciating pre-term contraction and our boy twin Joash died in-utero. During the traumatic delivery, his neck snapped and we had to beg the mortician to stitch his head back to his tiny torso so he can be cremated whole. Joash was the neglected middle child...I wasn't able to mourn for him fully because I had to be strong mentally and physically for the girl twin who's still fighting for survival within me. What ensued next was 8 weeks of complete bedrest in KKH, round the clock medical supervision, endless cocktails of drugs and jabs, until the vital signs indicated that I couldn't safely continue to keep her in anymore and Ashley Joy was delivered alive on June 3rd via emergency C-section. With an apgar score of 8/10, she fought 36 hours in the NICU, until the Lord called her home, much to her Daddy's disbelief. So many preemies smaller than her made it, but she didn't...

Child losses are difficult. What makes it worse is that no one else understands the gut-wrenching pain you are going through and no one seems to want to remember that our babies existed. How else can they react except to offer a sympathetic "How awful for you! I am so, so, so sorry you had to experience such a tremendous loss" or "It's so

unfortunate but the bible says everything happens for a reason and God works for the good of those who love Him" Really? My child has just died and you are telling me 'it is good'? Oh, the insensitivity! Till this day, it sickens us that people give such inappropriate responses to the child losses, whether from miscarriage or stillbirth. Yes, my babies were born premature, born small and we did not bring them home, but I did deliver them, we did hold them and they did exist. They were not a dream (or a nightmare which we wish we can snap out of...). Yet, our child losses are only real to us, the grieving parents. Even the mere mention of their anniversaries might trigger a response of 'there she goes again....'.

Granted, it is really hard for people to believe or acknowledge that they existed. It's not like a normal child birth and I don't have my brood by my side to remind people. And surprisingly, death is still very much a taboo topic in our modern, liberal society. Every time I'm asked if Dana is my only child (and why don't I consider giving her a sibling), there's a hitch in my response and a lump in my throat because I don't want to deny the existence of my 3 babies in Heaven. However, I also don't want to put anyone in a spot and force them to share my grief when they are simply being clueless. So out of propriety, I always answer with a polite 'yes, just one' only to have my heart ache a little. I thought that I could handle this better with time, but it's so hard...Having a healthy, happy daughter now does not negate or replace the fact that we have suffered 3 child losses...

I chose not to undergo grief counseling. Instead, I went on a solo trip (without the husband) after Ashley's funeral to wrestle and make peace with God. Individually, we retreated into [bereavement books](#) where we sought solace and strength from fellow bereaved parents. Outwardly, we laugh, cry and talk to friends about our experience without a hint of sadness or risk of getting reminded of our grief, but the void remains. Having said that, the pain does ease with time. Today, it's 7 years since we lost Joash. Anniversaries are bad, but most of the time now we are resigned to the fact that Nathaniel, Joash and Ashley live on in their Daddy and Mommy's hearts. You are ours and we miss you...



### [God Bottles My Every Tear](#)

#### **Lamentations 3**

<sup>19</sup> *The thought of my suffering and homelessness  
is bitter beyond words.*

<sup>20</sup> *I will never forget this awful time,  
as I grieve over my loss.*

<sup>21</sup> *Yet I still dare to hope  
when I remember this:*

<sup>22</sup> *The faithful love of the Lord never ends!  
His mercies never cease.*

<sup>23</sup> *Great is his faithfulness;  
his mercies begin afresh each morning.*

<sup>24</sup> *I say to myself, "The Lord is my inheritance;  
therefore, I will hope in him!"*

<sup>25</sup> *The Lord is good to those who depend on him,  
to those who search for him.*

<sup>26</sup> *So it is good to wait quietly  
for salvation from the Lord.*

*Dana's Mommy*

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