

going Home, a pilgrimage through grief

joan
encounter, eyes, smile, laughter
enchantment, angel, goddess
talking, singing, sharing, holding
happiness, joy, love
rabbi, vows, union
days, weeks, months, years
plans, trips, family, friends, laughter, hope
going Home: safety, warmth, comfort, Love

discomfort, pain
doctors, scans
cancer
shock, fear, anger, hope, pray
doctors, nurses, hospitals
scalpels, pills, tubes, injections, pain
waiting, hoping
waiting, hoping
hopeless, hopeless
anger, disappointment, tears, depression, resignation
hospice, nurse
morphine, waiting, breathing, rattle
silence
cold
tears, loneliness
going Home: safety, warmth, comfort, Love

calls, neptune, rabbi, family, friends
messages, cards, condolences, hugs
eulogy, grief, ashes
letters, lawyer, accountant, bank
cupboards, closets, drawers, goodwill
friends, neighbors, meals, talk, healing
walk, read, think, meditate, healing
memories, photos, gifts, healing
tears, smiles, tears, smiles, healing
not doing, doing, not doing, doing, healing
write, draw, paint, sculpt, healing
quiet, silence, meditate, healing
quiet, silence, pray, healing
think, feel, imagine, healing
group, listen, talk, share, healing
days, weeks, months, years, healing
plans, trips, family, friends, laughter, hope
going Home: safety, warmth, comfort, Love

in memory of joan tanya hodes
tom hodes, 2008

Tom's thoughts about his poem:

I wrote this poem in memory of my wife, Joan Hodges, who died of colon cancer in June of 2007. The poem is entitled: "going Home: a pilgrimage through grief." A pilgrimage is defined as a journey to a sacred place or a shrine, or, as I like to think of it, a journey with a spiritual purpose. This has certainly been true in my case. All of the words in my poem are in lower case except two – the word Home and the word Love. I capitalized them to indicate that they refer to something transcending a home with four walls, something transcending human love.

My poem is unusual in structure. There is no rhyme or meter; there are no sentences or even phrases. I use single words to tell the story of my pilgrimage. The first section is happy – it tells of our courtship and marriage. The second section is sad – it tells of Joan's illness and death. The third section is hopeful – as I tell about the aftermath of her death and my attempts to promote the healing of my soul. As you might guess, writing the poem was a healing experience for me



*Tom Hodges, with grief counselors
Ann DeHovitz (l) & Kristin Frank (r)*