

## Excerpt from Chapter 1 - *Life without Lisa* by Richard Ballo

I sit on the bed with each of the boys and begin to talk about our day.

"I never said good bye," Victor admits in a quiet voice.

"When I called you from the hospital, I held the phone to Mom's ear so you could say something."

I'm somewhat irritated that Victor didn't take advantage of that moment, but I try to find a loving way to reply. After all,

he's just a little kid who's lost his mother. My heart aches for him.

"It's okay, Victor," I whisper as I hold him close. My tears fall onto his blondish brown hair and I'm reminded of

how much he looks like Lisa. Similar color hair, same pale blue eyes.

Nick jumps onto my lap and wraps his arms around my neck. The three of us cling to each other. No one wants to

let go.

"You know, you can talk to Mom anytime," I reassure the boys, "because I believe her spirit is still alive and she

will know its' you."

We sit in silence - three weary swimmers adrift in a sea of shock and grief.

"I'll see you in the morning. I love you," I carry Nick to his bed.

"What are we doing tomorrow?" asks Nick.

"I don't know," I say. "But I know we'll be together." I give Nick an extra long hug. He loves hugs.

As I stand at their bedroom door, I begin to sing the lullaby Lisa and I routinely sang to the boys at bedtime. It was a

favorite of hers, written by the Beatles.

"Now it's time to say goodnight. Good Night. Sleep tight. Now the sun turns out his light. Good night.

Sleep tight."

My voice cracks and I can't finish the first stanza. The boys - alone now with their own thoughts and feelings on this

tragic night - don't even seem to notice. I doubt I will ever be able to sing that song again.

Warily I am amble down the hall past the bathroom and kitchen stairs and into my room. I get ready for bed and

crawl under the covers alone, just as I have done for the last two months. Yet this night is different. The floodgates

open wide, and gut wrenching tears drench my pillow.

The difference tonight is that hope has died. The hope that she would survive another stay in the hospital is

dead. The hope that we would have more time together is dead. The belief in her invincibility is dead/ The hope of a

married life lived until old age is dead. I feel like I'm drowning in an ocean of tears. My entire being is filled with an

aching I've never know before.

I wish I were dead.