

WHEN I LEARNED PAIN WASN'T THE ONLY WAY TO REACH HIM

For a long time, pain felt like the only doorway left to William.

If I hurt, I was close. If I cried, I was remembering. If I let the ache soften, I worried I might lose him.

But slowly—almost imperceptibly—I learned that connection didn't have to wound me to be real. Love could be quieter. Gentler. Woven into the living moments of my days. This is how it began.

I ate my snack on his W plate, a small, ordinary choice—an invitation to let him sit with me while I ate. I talked to him while folding laundry, no ceremony, just conversation tucked into the rhythm of things that still needed doing. I wore green—his favorite color—letting my body remember him before my mind caught up.

I lit a candle at special meals, a soft flame, a way of saying you belong here too. I showed his picture to my living children again and again, so his face would stay familiar in our home and his name would stay spoken. We started a question journal—one question about him at dinner, answered the next morning—so we wouldn't forget the small things, the favorites, the details love doesn't want to lose.

Then I began writing to him, not about him. And suddenly grief became a conversation, a place where I could imagine his listening, his presence, our connection still alive on the page. We took his ashes with us when we traveled and spread him around the world, letting him be part of movement and memory, sky and soil and sea.

Over time, love asked more of me. I created a nonprofit in his honor, turning my longing into service and my loss into something that could hold others. I began showing up for other bereaved moms, walking with them through the earliest days of grief, offering the steadiness I once needed myself.

What I Know Now

Pain was never the proof of my love. Love was. Connection didn't disappear when the ache softened—it expanded. William is with me in snacks and laundry, in candlelight and color, in words written and hands held, in every place where love found a new way to live. And I am learning—slowly, tenderly—that staying connected does not require me to keep breaking.