



The Fabric of Family

Thoughts in Memory of George

Since my own healing journey began, I would regularly ask my dad, “Why are men mean to women? Why do they abuse and rape? Why do they play games? Do they fear powerful women? What are they missing within themselves?”

We would talk a long time about these things, and sometimes disagree. But I was so grateful that he wanted to understand himself, and other men, within these questions while simultaneously help me reconcile – and heal from – PTSD related to my own sexual assault experience.

It was tough for my dad to know I was a survivor, and even more difficult to talk about it. But, presence does not always involve words and, without both of my parents, there is no doubt I would be homeless, and worse. The *Fabric of Family* – in some form – is essential to Rising With Honor on the road to healing.

The **Band of Brothers Project** was inspired by my dad, George Reash. I respected him for many things, but mostly I respected his willingness to grow, be open and try to understand his feelings - even as he aged. By his late 50s, after challenges with anxiety and depression, my dad seemed to realize that his life had many more layers to explore and decades ago, he started a Men’s Group, once expressed as **The Band of Brothers**.

The Band of Brothers was a lifeline for my dad in his last unexpected days. And the poem written for him (pages 2-3) reflects the beauty and blessing of his awesome men friends.

Before he died on November 10th 2016, he asked me, “so what are you going to do with your life?”. I responded, “I am on a mission to help heal women from trauma”; and, in his wisdom style, he paused a bit and then said with a deep breath, “Okay. Something in the way he said “okay” felt more like an announcement to the future, than anything else.

My hope is that the **Band of Brothers Project** gives men a chance to speak their truths and gives men and women, together, the chance to learn and heal.

-Inspirations from Georgia Reash

A Band of Brothers

for George Reash

So this is what it comes down to,
after a long life friendship,
our final offerings of affection,
strong hugs as you befriend mystery.

Now your body turns away from what it knows
toward the unfathomable we can never know
but simply trust with all that is our life.

Thirty years ago you gathered men together,
no rules, except three:

no work, no cars, no sports,

just life – the rough smooth road
the heartfelt details of daily life,
stuff men don't talk about,
not even to themselves.

We did not sit mute as one would expect
knowing how these rules might severely silence men.

Instead, you gave us a way,
with beer and supper,
to talk hard with each other,
troubles, joys, matters of the heart.

Most of what you taught we didn't know we were learning
until life demanded wisdom and we knew the source was you.

Slowly over time, we realized what we were learning
was the wonder of the masculine bond deep in the gut,
men bound by the strength of courageous vulnerability.

Now, because of you, we are a band of brothers.
Without you we would be only loosely allied,
the back slap, the shoulder punch, the knuckle bump,
the braggadocios story told to far surpass the rest.

Through you we got each other, lean and honest,
and a little bit afraid to be who men could be
when free of trying to be the disembodied
smiling shirts on the men's store manikin.

We are three-dimensional, flawed and fluid old men now,
reviewing who we were and viewing who we have become,
still choosing to become even more of what you dreamed
we could be, together and alone.

Now George, we say *thank you* with hearts full of affection,
and crying from eyes sight-blurred with tears,
we say *goodnight*.

Warren Gaston
October 24, 2016
<http://www.poetrybreaksthings.com>