

Which cemetery?
Who has to be notified?

The decisions were endless. The first question that should be asked, the first of those many decisions to make should be: Would your loved one have wanted to be a tissue donor?

Coincidentally, Brad and I had discussed donation shortly before his death. I asked him if he would want to be listed as a donor.

“Absolutely,” he said, and gave me that easy smile of his. “Mom,” he said, gesturing to his body, “this is only a rental.”

I cannot describe the comfort of knowing that my son’s eyes continue to see the world, although through a different lens. The games of rugby he so loved to play will continue with the gift of tendons into another athlete or weekend warrior. Heart valves will save the life of a child with a heart defect.

The gift of organ and tissue donation can give another dimension of meaning to a life too briefly lived: a newborn baby, a preschooler, a teenager. It gave my family comfort, and yes, the *gift* of a legacy for Brad’s life, and a source of comfort to a grieving mother and a devastated family.

Brad gave so much in life and to life and I want him to be remembered. Not the tragedy that was his death, but the gift that was his life. Through the privilege of donation, it was a gift that we shared with others, when his heart could no longer beat.

Our lives were incredibly enriched by Brad’s life and love. It is my belief that in the lives of those transplant recipients, as they go on to live and love, there is a legacy. And when they laugh, I’m sure there is an echo to Brad’s spirit. And he is smiling.

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Mother
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POEM

They were beautiful once

She collected her first scar as a child.
A careless uncle stepped on her pinky,
Pressing it into a permanent but gentle hook.
Scalding water and burning pans have
thickened skin, dulled nerves.
We screamed in the bathtub, feet on fire
Her hands swirling in lava, coaxing us.

Her joints are swelled, hard now.
The wedding solitaire
sleeps in its velvet crevice;
she took it off before it strangled her.
Its replacement, with clustered sapphires,
a spider’s cataracts, shines dully
from caked Ivory soap.

Now her thumbs hook the steering wheel.
The fingers hang
in involuntary curves,
scalloped and pink,
pointing rudely to the pedals
and feet that have forgotten
which way to push.

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