

## Loneliness, Or Alone-ness ... thoughts beginning year three ...

Once a widow client of mine said year four was the hardest. Just into year three I find I am struggling with an alone-ness that is visceral, the proverbial “lonely in a crowd” feeling that lives with me, now tugs at my heart, lurks in the recesses of my mind, conjures memories without warning. I’m dreaming often, of Bob, he on the periphery perhaps, or center stage but still obscure, a shadow person whom I long to grasp, to hold, to lean against, to breathe in. The dreams are not nightmares. But they are elusive, painful.

I want my mother. I want to ask her how she did it all those years, losing Daddy at 47. How she had the guts, the stamina, the curiosity, the passion to go on. I understand her so much better now, her seeming quirks, times of challenge, burdens she bore. I remember her intelligence, love of Emily Dickinson, her life of the mind, her knowledge of Scripture, the way she prayed. I remember our walks. How she’d come of an evening. I’d hear the gravel roll in the driveway, see her slim figure emerge, hear her call, “I thought you might like a walk.” I know the need for a walk, just to be with someone you trust, can talk to side by side. I remember feeling for her as the sky darkened, steps quickened, conversations deepened. I remember recognizing what may have brought her out on that particular night, her missing, her alone-ness.

I am awash in a grief journey just now, at the sight of lovers walking hand in hand, diners at outdoor tables for two. It is

summer and I am fit to be tied at the power of longing for the people I have lost. For the sight of Bob near to the heart of God in the out of doors he loved, mowing, trimming, raking, seeding. Longing for my mother, to tap into her wisdom, ask her how it was for her, to lose her best love. Longing for my father, still so young when he passed to heaven, and my brothers and me too young to have lost him.

Summer is messing with my heart strings. Flowers and green and birds and breezes and beauty...walking hand in hand, down our road into the sunset, no need for words, *not* alone. Tears fall ... 