

*"I Still Believe"*, by Desiree Woodland

This book shares Desiree's struggle to regain her faith (to believe again that an all-knowing God is still caring in charge and present in her universe), after her son was taken by the scourge of mental illness and suicide. Writing in the midst of tremendous grief, she tells the story of how she was able to claw her way back to her lifelong faith in Jesus and a Christian God.

Reading her book, I felt glad that faith was able to heal her shattered life, and also knew that I lack the background to relate to a Christian God and Jesus in that way. Yet, my own faith in a greater Being who cares for human beings has been shaken; and reading Desiree's book has helped to illuminate the path of healing that I must also take.

Her example, her struggles, and her winning through to a renewed belief in an all-embracing deity makes me yearn for a comparable recognition that there is in my life an ultimate protector and source of meaning that I can learn to trust again.

As I ask myself where I might find this universal kindness and caring in the context of my own life, I realize that I must find the sacred in the life I am already living.

I am asking myself how my own 'belief pictures' are faring. When the barking of a dog in a distant yard and the nearby wind chimes greeting the passing breeze give evidence of a realm that is always just passing through--just as my son passed through and is now gone from my life-- how can I 'believe' that an eternal and abiding presence is standing by and looking out for us?

The courage of those who have been able to go through the pain of unspeakable loss to find life in the world again inspires me. Desiree's book documents how she has risen from the ashes and can now help others who are also suffering in our world.

To perceive the eternal in the passing winds of time and to experience the presence of a great goodness and truth ready to cradle us in love and forgiveness, that is what I long to find again. If I am to ever have my confusion and inadequacy gathered up in the arms of a great Being, then I need books like Desiree's to show me that this journey of healing is possible for me too.