

enriched and is purged of its chains, we are in a position to explore the true meaning of love. 'When we know this we are truly awake. It is the essence of our birth, not of blood and pain but of spirit.'

This little book should not be digested at one gulp but sampled at leisure, possibly as bedside reading. Its short reflective passages provide much food for thought.

Rosalind Priestman  
Cruse Worker

## LIVING BEYOND LOSS: Death in the Family

Froma Walsh, Monica McGoldrick (eds). London, UK: WW Norton, 1991. £19.95 hb, £12.95 pb.

This was the first book to address death and bereavement from a family perspective and, like several more recent publications<sup>1</sup>, it draws heavily on family systems theory while emphasising the political, economic, social and cultural contexts of grieving families.

The early chapters explore the impact of loss on the organisation and development of the family system at different stages in its life cycle. As the title suggests, bereavement is viewed as a normal transition with the potential to increase a family's capacity to deal with future challenges, but also to render its members stuck or derailed in their development.

Subsequent chapters cover various losses – a child, a parent, a spouse or a sibling – as well as different time frames; the anticipation of loss, the immediate aftermath and long-term repercussions. These provide moving and enriching insights into how an individual's mourning can be profoundly influenced, not only by their immediate living family, but even by the way previous generations dealt with family losses.

Later chapters focus on specific issues: designing and using family mourning rituals, ways of resolving the 'ambiguous losses' created by Alzheimer patients and missing persons, and novel approaches to grief blocked by guilt.

All the authors are accomplished family therapists and the case examples richly demonstrate how their practice flows naturally and with insight from the underpinning theory. However, many of the techniques focus on changing family interaction patterns and shared beliefs and are likely to be unfamiliar, if not challenging, to many bereavement counsellors whose practice is likely to be informed by the very different, and potentially conflicting, humanistic and psychodynamic traditions.

While I have no hesitation in recommending this text as a valuable resource of both ideas and techniques for the practitioner already experienced in family work, I suspect that many bereavement counsellors will

find it difficult to translate the complex theory and specialised methods herein into their regular practice.

Bill Young  
Consultant Child Psychiatrist

I. Shapiro ER. Grief as a Family Process: a Developmental Approach to Clinical Practice. New York, UK: Guilford, 1994.

## JOHN'S BOOK\*

Jill Fuller. Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth Press, 1993. £9.99 hb.

This is a children's book about John, probably aged about 11, whose father dies suddenly and unexpectedly, so that he is left to deal with his own confused emotions and his desire to help his mother. Many of the reactions we might expect from a boy of this age are sensitively described – his anger is vented on the greenhouse which a kindly neighbour helps him repair, and on his teacher who embarrasses him by reporting the death to the class in front of him. His fear of losing his mother as well, leads him to attempt an amusing and elaborate subterfuge to stay off school in order to keep an eye on her; but together they face the difficult things – the first 'family' outing without Dad, various domestic problems and, especially, Christmas. His mother's remarriage to a widower with an eight-year-old daughter, and their move to a different house, illustrate well how children are deeply affected by secondary losses. The reason for the title is that John's aunt wisely gives him a book about his family tree and encourages him to continue it.

Many of the incidents concern things that matter to children – school and relationship with peers, holidays and a fair. Unfortunately the cover and illustrations have an old-fashioned look. I find it hard to imagine a child picking it off a shelf without encouragement. It certainly looks less appealing than *Two Weeks with the Queen*<sup>1</sup>, which is aimed at a similar age group. I can, however, imagine it being very useful to a teacher or counsellor who persuades a young client to read it, and to comment on John's story, comparing it with his or her own. It could be a good way of distancing children sufficiently from their own experience to get them talking.

Mary Bending  
Cruse Counsellor

1. *Two Weeks with the Queen*. Gleitzman M. London, UK: Macmillan, 1995.

\*Available from Cruse Bereavement Care, 126 Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1UR

## ABSTRACTS

### Ancestor Worship in Japan: Dependence and the Resolution of Grief.

Klass D. *Omega* 1996; 33(4): 279-302

'Japanese ancestor worship provides sophisticated theory and ritual to accomplish what is described in the

West as the "resolution of grief"'. In his informative, interesting article Klass explores this concept through an examination of the rituals by means of which the Japanese keep alive their bonds with their ancestors who, they feel, are constantly present and interacting with the living. He places this phenomenon in its historical/political context and discusses the fact that, in contrast to the West, it is dependence within the family, not autonomy, which is valued, and which forms the basis of the continuous link with the dead.

His description of the various stages of the obligatory rituals throws valuable light not only on the attitude to death in Japan but also on the way in which the rituals reflect Japanese society as a whole.

### Beyond Bereavement Support Group Meetings: Exploring Outside Social Contacts Among the Members

Caserta MS, Lund DA. *Death Studies* 1966; 20(6): 537-56

This article examines the extent to which participants in bereavement support groups make informal contact with other members of their group outside the regular meetings, and the effect this has on the bereavement outcomes. Although such contact is discouraged for various reasons – such as the possibility that participants who do not have this contact may feel 'left out' – the writers of this article suggest that in some cases it may be helpful. They propose other measures through which support groups can help those who take part in them.

### Paternal Bereavement in Older Men

Goodman M, Black HK, Rubinstein RL. *Omega* 1996; 33(4): 303-22

This article summarises the findings of a project which studied the reaction of 25 men aged between 60 and 88 to the death of an adult child. The authors identify three categories of adjustment. The first group of bereaved, who regarded themselves as having been successful in life, appeared to adjust best. A second group used avoidance, denial and dependence on others as the best way of coping. Only two of the men, who felt they had been failures, were unable to come to terms with their loss.

The article concludes that traditional male modes of thinking, feeling and acting may protect older men from their deepest selves, and thus buffer them against potential setbacks in life, including bereavement.

Sheila Hodges and John Bush

## EDITORS

Colin Murray Parkes  
OBE MD DPM FRCPsych

Dora Black  
MB FRCPsych FRCPCH DPM

## ADVISORY EDITORS

Ofra Ayalon PhD Israel

Tom Lundin MD PhD Sweden

Prof Robert Pynoos MD  
MPh, USA

Prof Beverley Raphael  
AM DPM(ANZCP) FRANZCP  
FRCPsych, Australia

Prof Lars Weisaeth MD PhD  
FNPA, Norway

Prof Robert Weiss PhD, USA

## MANAGING EDITOR

Patricia Scowen MA SRN HV

## IN-HOUSE EDITOR

Rosie Dalzell BSc Cert Ed

## PUBLISHED BY

Cruse Bereavement Care  
126 Sheen Road  
Richmond, Surrey TW9 1UR, UK  
Telephone 0181-940 4818  
Fax 0181-940 7638

*Bereavement Care* is sold subject to the condition it shall not be lent, resold, reproduced, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's consent.

The editors welcome advertisements and inserts, but do not necessarily associate themselves with the views of advertisers or books advertised.

## SUBSCRIPTION RATE 1997

### Individual Subscribers

(ie paid for by an individual subscriber for personal use)

UK: £12.00

Republic of Ireland: IR £13.00

USA: US \$33.00

Canada: CAN \$44.00

Australia: AUST \$42

All other countries: Stg £13.00

### Libraries and Organisations

(eg hospitals, departments, colleges, hospices, companies; paid for by organisation and/or for multiple readership)

UK: £22.00

Republic of Ireland: IR £23.00

USA: US \$50.00

Canada: CAN \$66.00

Australia: AUST \$63.00

All other countries: Stg £23.00

*Bereavement Care* is published three times a year in Spring, Summer and Winter.

All prices are inclusive of airmail postage. Payment may be made by cheque, money order or credit card (Mastercard, Eurocard, Access, Visa).

Most back numbers available at £3.00 plus 35p postage (UK).

## BEST OF BEREAVEMENT CARE

Packs of selected articles from past issues, grouped in themes are available from the publishers at prices from £2.85 to £6.50.

COPYRIGHT © Cruse  
Bereavement Care 1997  
ISSN 0268-2621

Printed by Doppler Press,  
Brentwood, Essex CM14 4RX

cruse - bereavement care