

## Glimpses of Heaven: True Stories of Hope and Peace at the End of Life's Journey

**Trudy Harris**

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When the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas wrote his poem, “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night,” he was pleading with his father to “rage, rage against the dying of the light.” Thomas’s passionate plea to his dying father is a common sentiment for most when faced with the death of a loved one, yet when Trudy Harris opens her book *Glimpses of Heaven* with a chapter about her own father’s death, her attitude toward death reminds readers of a vastly different approach. Instead of urging her father to “fight” his inevitable mortality, she accepts his end and she describes his journey into the afterlife peacefully and confidently.

Harris, who was a hospice nurse for twenty-two years, maintains this attitude toward death as she details for her readers a wide variety of end-of-life experiences. Her stories range from the personal to the professional. Each story represents a unique person’s experience with his or her encounter with death; hence, the thread that holds these stories together is not how each died, but how each accepted that death with grace and integrity. Harris’s theme is that “dying is a very natural part of living.”

While these stories are often touching, even inspiring, after reading more than a few at one sitting, they feel repetitive. Despite this criticism, readers are sure to find Harris’s tender treatment of death a benevolent companion to the heart-wrenching emotions that can accompany grief and bereavement. Her assertion that death and the process of dying are “spiritual journeys” can be clearly seen in each story she relates to her reader. So, while Dylan Thomas proclaimed that people should “burn and rave at close of day,” Harris would certainly counter that claim, with her discerning tone, that dying is not “an ending but a beginning.”

JESSICA HIGGINS (February 13, 2008)

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