

TWO POEMS BY JOHN O'DONOGHUE FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

For the Family and Friends of a Suicide
- 'To Bless the Space Between Us'

As you huddle around the torn silence,
Each by this lonely deed exiled
To a solitary confinement of soul,
May some small glow from what has been lost
Return like the kindness of candlelight....

May one of the lovely hours
Of memory return
Like a field of ease
Among these graveled days.

May the Angel of Wisdom
Enter this ruin of absence
And guide your minds
To receive this bitter chalice
So that you do not damage yourselves
By attending only at the hungry altar
Of regret and anger and guilt....

May your loss become a sanctuary
Where new presence will dwell
To refine and enrich
The rest of your life
With courage and compassion....

For the Parent on the Death of a Child

No one knows the wonder
Your child awoke in you,
Your heart a perfect cradle
To hold its presence.
Inside and outside became one
As new waves of love
Kept surprising your soul.
Now you sit bereft
Inside a nightmare,
Your eyes numbed
By the sight of a grave
No parent should ever see.
You will wear this absence
Like a secret locket,
Always wondering why
Such a new soul
Was taken home so soon.
Let the silent tears flow
And when your eyes clear
Perhaps you will glimpse
How your eternal child
Has become the unseen angel
Who parents your heart
And persuades the moon
To send new gifts ashore.

*In memory of PFC Shane M. Reifert,
101st Airborne Division, Killed in Action,
November 6, 2010, Afghanistan*