

*Love from the
Other Side*

CAROL SHIMP

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SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS



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Contents

Introduction	vii
Chapter 1: Spiritual Childhood.....	1
Chapter 2: Many Years Later	11
Chapter 3: Danny	17
Chapter 4: Returning Home	23
Chapter 5: The Phone Calls	25
Chapter 6: Alex.....	37
Chapter 7: Taking Walks.....	53
Chapter 8: Seeking Help	57
Chapter 9: The Haven for Spiritual Travelers.....	63
Chapter 10: Spirits	75
Chapter 11: The Supermarket	79
Chapter 12: Janet.....	83
Chapter 13: Automatic Writing.....	91
Chapter 14: Karma	97

Chapter 15: The Accident	105
Chapter 16: Where Angels Fear to Tread	111
Chapter 17: The Dream/Thanksgiving	117
Chapter 18: December and Christmas.....	125
Chapter 19: Henry	135
Chapter 20: January New Year's/Yard Sale	141
Chapter 21: Crossing Over.....	151
Chapter 22: Letting Go	157
Chapter 23: Publix	165
Chapter 24: The Gift.....	171
Chapter 25: Ohio.....	183
Chapter 26: Footprints	197
Chapter 27: Back to Work	203
Chapter 28: Thomas O'Leary.....	211
Chapter 29: Christmas	221
Chapter 30: Regression	225
Chapter 31: Love	241
Afterword.....	245
Acknowledgements.....	247
Books That Have Helped Me	249

Introduction

My name is Carol Shimp and this is my story. Some names have been changed to protect the privacy of family and characters. I have used fiction in portions and edited for clarity. My characters from Publix are fictional. This story is told according to my memory, my experiences, and notes I kept. I'm just an ordinary person having an extraordinary spiritual life.

My experience was with the earthbound entity I have, named Danny. He entered my energy field and brought back all of the memories I had repressed. We (I) worked with his spirit and we helped each other to find healing, peace, light, and love.

Spiritual Childhood

A young child's viewpoint is innocent and non-judgmental. Anything and everything can be new and wonderful until years of conditioning start us questioning what we see and hear, coloring how we interpret life. My family life stayed a little more in tune with the open-minded view of existence. Things happened regularly in my family that kept me watching and open for conditions and events that don't quite fit in the accepted normal worldview.

In the late '40s, when I was six years old, televisions weren't in every home yet. Being a typical child of the time, I wanted to watch *Howdy Doody* like all my friends did, so I used to visit our neighbor, Mrs. Vesta Shall. Mr. and Mrs. Shall happened to have the closest TV as well as a generous nature and two sons who had been active military in World War II. One evening I stood by her dining room table and saw her son Teddy standing on the stairs. Being a friendly child I looked up and said, "Hi, Teddy!" Behind me, Mrs. Shall burst into sobs and tears. She called my mother and I was rushed out of the house. I was confused; I didn't know what I had done to cause Mrs. Shall to cry, and I have never remembered exactly what my mother said to me at the time. It wasn't until much later that I found out Teddy had died in the war.

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Such things have occurred my entire life. I remember an afternoon in my middle forties when I was helping my mother clean her refrigerator at her home in South Florida. The side kitchen door was open. Suddenly a shadow passed through the side door, through me, and continued out the front door.

I asked my mother, who was nearby, "Did you see that?"
"See what?" she asked.

By then, I was used to the fact that not everyone could see or sense my spiritual experiences. I just figured whatever "It" was, it was trying to get somewhere. When I heard voices in my sleep or saw a vision, I knew it was a premonition of things to come and nothing to stress over. It was simply the way my life operated.

I was born on the 30th of June 1941, and grew up in Canton, Ohio. My mother said she thought I was a tumor. She didn't think she was pregnant because I was her change of life baby. My mother told me that when I was born my aunts couldn't get over my large liquid brown eyes. "Carol has the most beautiful eyes," my Aunt Ruth would say.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the American Midwest wasn't all one big Norman Rockwell painting, but there were places and times that fit the profile of his artwork -- especially when family would get together.

I can almost smell the purple lilacs from our yard that bloomed in early spring. Typical of the era, my father would get creative from time to time with his can-do attitude, making something out of nothing. Once, he scavenged a dark blue back seat he had removed from an old car, and built a swing with a wood frame around it. He then hung two chains from the beams in the ceiling of our front porch.

During the summers when I was six or seven years old, my mother would fix a light lunch, sometimes egg salad sandwiches and juicy peaches ripened to perfection, with glasses of refreshing iced tea with lemon. Afterwards, on the cool summer afternoons, I would stretch out on our porch swing with my eyes half closed

and listen to nearby traffic until it would seem to drift far away. A gentle breeze would rock the swing, while I dreamed I held a golden string attached to a large white helium-filled balloon floating and lifting me upward toward the sky. That's where I would meet my love, my prince. Then the sharp barking of a dog or the harsh blare of an automobile horn would bring me back to earth. My balloon always burst just when I would get close to seeing my prince.

I wasn't the only one to enjoy that wonderful swing. On many late, lazy summer afternoons, I would find my mother or sisters stretched out there, rocked sound asleep by soft summer breezes. Our front porch was a gathering spot, the stage where stories were told. On cool summer evenings, the rest of the family gathered there. My aunts, uncles, and cousins would settle in with us on the porch, where we passed around large bowls of popcorn. We would sit, sipping iced tea and sodas, while we listened to the old family stories, along with a few current ones. They were often about old superstitions and spirits.

When I was six years old, I remember my mother told me, "Grandpa Joe [who lived with us in Ohio], is going home to Pennsylvania for a visit."

I was worried because he was leaving us. Immediately I started toward the back yard and found Grandpa Joe in his baggy black slacks and white-collared shirt, sitting on an old wooden bench under the apple tree.

I sat down beside him and carefully smoothed my blue dress. Mother was always telling me to keep my knees together and my skirt down. I watched as he carefully peeled a shiny red apple with his pocketknife. He cut a piece off and offered it to me. The taste was a little tart and I made a face. "Grandpa, since you came to live with us you have never gone back home to Pennsylvania. I don't want you to go."

He wiped a tear from my cheek. "I have to go home. It's time," he said with a smile.

☿ LOVE FROM THE OTHER SIDE

"But I'll never see you again," I cried.

"Of course you will. If you need me, all you have to do is think of me." He carefully placed his pocketknife and apple on the bench beside him. Then with one hand he brushed a strand of gray hair off his forehead before reaching his arms out to hug me. I looked in his liquid brown eyes and wrapped my arms around his neck and held on real tight. I cried hard because although Mom told me he was going for a visit, somehow I knew, Grandpa Joe wasn't coming back to us. I don't know how I knew. But I knew. He left later by car with my Aunt Ruth.

When Mother answered the phone call, and was told the news, we packed a suitcase and climbed in my dad's Ford, then headed for Pennsylvania. My grandpa, Joseph Wisniewski, had a heart attack on the steps of the Polish Club he founded in New Kensington, Pennsylvania. I had cried so hard at his funeral I remember everyone kept handing me handkerchiefs for my nose and eyes. We buried him next to Grandma.

While growing up, I had plenty of time to daydream. My sister Vivian was twelve years older than I, and Emily had me by ten years. By the time I was old enough to play on my own, Vivian and Emily were busy with high school, and working weekends in the neighborhood soda shop.

I remember one afternoon in my preschool years something drew me inside my bedroom closet. I don't know how long I slept there, but I heard Mother call me. She found me on the floor in the corner.

"Carol, what are you doing in the closet? I have been looking all over the neighborhood for you." It was a few minutes before I realized where I was, still groggy from a deep sleep. "I had the neighbors searching for you."

I didn't understand why they were worried about me.

Often my mother used to whisper to my aunts or speak Polish when she didn't want me to hear her conversations. I sensed she was discussing something about family and spirits. I heard bits

and parts of conversations. I believed that was why Father Burnis, a priest from All Saints Polish Catholic Church, would grace our family with a house blessing. My mother would empty and beat the dusty bag from her Hoover vacuum cleaner against the side of our home, a cloud of dust filling the air. She would be in high spirits, singing "O Come All Ye Faithful" as she swept and dusted our home. Mother always hummed Christmas carols when she cleaned our home. I believed those were the only songs she knew the words to. I knew someone special was coming to visit. Once a year around Easter, we would meet Father Burnis at our front door. He always wore black pants and shirt with his white collar, his crucifix on a chain around his neck. I watched the back of his head and his thinning white hair as he wrote on the top frame of our front door with white chalk: 20 C + M + B 09. Then he would recite a prayer, "Oh Blessed Trinity." After the blessing, Father Burnis would visit with us. My dad retrieved from our basement a bottle of his homemade red wine, and shared it with Father Burnis. Mother and I went about doing other things while my dad and our priest sat at our kitchen table and talked. Our priest had rosy cheeks and was feeling jolly when he was ready to leave.

"God bless and protect you, Marge and Frank." He waved goodbye and walked toward his car.

Attending first grade, I walked several blocks to Saint Paul's grade school. Sometimes I walked with friends and other times by myself. Someone, it seemed, was always with me...nobody I could see, but it was an energy and feeling I had. A nun in her long black dress and white habit told our catechism class about guardian angels that protected us. I accepted the fact that I had a guardian angel. In the second grade after my first communion, I walked to confession on Saturday afternoons. It was safe to walk in those days. One Saturday the nuns had locked the bathrooms. When I arrived in church I really had to relieve myself, but the restrooms were locked so I tried to hold it. I entered the confessional and blessed myself.

✧ LOVE FROM THE OTHER SIDE

I began with "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned." Just as I said the words I felt warm liquid running down my legs. I ended up peeing in the confessional. The priest never said anything to me. After that the bathrooms were not locked. My underpants must have dried while walking home in the hot summer afternoon. I was too embarrassed to tell my mother. She never asked me about the incident.

At eight years of age, on a Saturday, Emily took me to a baseball game played on a field in our neighborhood. There was a gas station beside the field where the kids hung out. Two brothers owned the station, and they had a German Shepherd dog. I was standing in the station with the other children when suddenly the dog lunged toward me and ripped my face. My upper lip was hanging below my bottom one. I must have been terrified; with all the commotion, it's hard for me to remember. They rushed me to the hospital. I couldn't figure out what I did to make the dog angry. I have never been afraid of animals and I felt sorry for that dog because they put it to sleep. The doctor did reconstructive surgery on my face. I attended school while my face was still bandaged. I don't remember how my classmates reacted toward me. I felt my lay teacher showed me sympathy. Mother didn't want me to look in a mirror, but I did. Looking in the mirror, I wondered if I would ever look normal again.

Dear Guardian Angel, will I ever be pretty again? What will my friends think of me? With the back of my hand I wiped the tears from my face. As time went by my scars were less visible. Emily told me recently she always felt guilty because she took me to the ball game and was there at the station. It wasn't her fault. We have no control over incidents, they just happen -- but now when I hear a dog bark viciously, I freeze.

There were better times. We lived on Fifteenth Street, just off of Harrisburg Road. James Dry Cleaning and Laundry stood across the street from our home. Vivian and Emily used to look out of their bedroom window checking out the truck drivers as they came and left from the parking garage. I overheard their discussions, normal domestic subjects: "Oh, Joe's single," or "Tom is married." The

owners of the business had a daughter almost my age, and we became friends. In the evening after all of the employees left for the day, we played. There was a concrete ramp leading from the dry-cleaning room to the laundry room. April and I took turns crawling in the canvas buggies. Then we pushed each other down the ramp. We would go flying down the aisle between the washers and curtain stretchers, the wheels roaring past the aroma of laundry soap and bleach. The following morning when employees came to work they had a fit, because the laundry orders were mixed up. After that, April's dad told us to use our roller skates. Some days, when we took the time to untangle a confused mass of hangers piled in a corner, we were paid a penny a hanger. We chatted and giggled as we worked.

Down the road from the laundry stood Quality Dairy where milk was processed. Some days I would stop there for chocolate milk. The far end of our street was a creek. Behind the creek was a factory, Union Metal. My cousins and I used to wade in the creek, our bare feet in water with black muck oozing between our toes. We would catch tadpoles in a jar and sometimes minnows. On weekends we would go the local Windsor movie theater to see Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, or Gene Autry.

My mother, Marge, spent her life taking care of others. When my grandmother passed away, my grandfather and Aunt Fay (who was twelve years old at the time) came to live with us. Not too long after that, my father's niece Paula came to our home. After my mother's sister died, Uncle Larry came to join us in our two-story stucco home as well.

My mother and father, Frank, worked in the steel mill during World War II. Our immediate and extended family never worried about dinner. Whether it was tuna and cream sauce, potato pancakes, or pot roast and potatoes, we all gathered around the dinner table for Mother's cooking. She was always baking or busy with pots on the stove. My sisters Vivian and Emily and I were usually stuck doing dishes.

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As I grew older I suppressed my strange feelings and premonitions. I dated guys in high school but none of them interested me. Then I met Danny Malone. We dated and he gave me an engagement ring in my senior year. I finished high school but wanted more out of life. I broke up with Danny and at eighteen years of age I packed my bags and left for New York City. After two years I returned home, was introduced to and married Alex Shimp. After that, marriage, children, and everyday life kept me busy.

While searching through boxes of keepsakes recently, I found a poem on the back page of Mother's tattered recipe book. The poem says a lot about my mother and her spirit.

THE KITCHEN PRAYER

Lord of all pots and pans, and things,
Since I've not time to be
A saint by doing lovely things
Or watching late with Thee,
Or dreaming in the dawn light,
Or storming Heaven's gates,
Make me a saint by getting meals
And washing up the plates
Although I must have Martha's hands
I have a Mary mind,
And when I black the boots and shoes,
Thy sandals, Lord, I find
I think of how they trod the earth
Each time I scrub the floor;
Accept this meditation, Lord -
I haven't time for more.

Warm all the kitchen with Thy love
And light it with Thy peace.
Forgive me all my worry,

And make my grumbling cease.
Thou who didst love to give men food
In room or by the sea,
Accept this service I do.
I do it unto Thee.

--Klara Munkres

Since moving to South Florida in 1969, most of my relatives have passed on. I miss those family gatherings we had on the front porch. My family taught me to be open-minded and accepting of the mysteries of spirit and life. So when I am walking on a warm day and a cool breeze ruffles my hair I feel blessed.

All my life, I have had dreams and messages, feelings that tended to be precognitive in nature. In 1978, after my mother Marge, passed away, her active spirit, and the love she sent me triggered my need for knowledge and experience of the other side. Although I meditated privately, I also found a small group who gathered in a circle to meditate. Together we brought in white light for love, peace, and healing. I read New Age books on spirit materialization and dreams. It's not really New Age. People have been giving prophecies for centuries. In the 1950s, during my girlhood, people didn't even talk about those things. But in 1996 on Mother's Day in May, my spirit guides came to remind me I needed to pay attention. I was in complete shock. Being raised a Catholic, I still went to church and prayed my rosary. I learned self-discipline in Catholic School. Mass and receiving Holy Communion always made me feel saintly. I never discussed my spirit friends with a priest. I wanted to keep peace in my two conflicting worlds. Why create a controversy I knew I couldn't win? I wasn't sure what my spirit guides were trying to tell me. But I knew I wanted to go on with my quest for learning. None of my studies had prepared me for the experience I was about to have.