

Sheila Kay Turner, *Journey of Grief: Miracles Do Happen Don't They*. Bloomington, Indiana: CrossBooks, 2011.

Sheila Kay Turner of Martin, Tennessee, earned degrees in nursing and psychology at the University of Tennessee at Martin. As a grandmother and school nurse, she learned a great deal about children. In this slender volume she shares her many experiences with her beloved granddaughter Madison.

Though there was distant thunder and light sprinkling that almost mid-September Sunday afternoon in 2006, suddenly that changed for Madison's and Sheila's families. Even as the eleven-year-old girl left a house porch, a single lightning bolt hit a nearby tree and most unfortunately found Madison's body. Thereafter, Sheila likely kept a journal of the myriad emotions that converge on a grieving individual. Understandably she profoundly hoped her earliest hospital observations were not the most dire; besides, "Miracles do happen and God answers prayer—doesn't He? I will keep asking!" For a week Sheila adhered to, "Miracles do happen, don't they?" Naturally a girl should not precede her Nana to Heaven. Further, Sheila found "angels" in those who comforted the family regardless of color and gender. Almost at the end of the hospital ordeal a particularly caring nurse worked two hours cleaning up Madison, leading to the conclusion, "What a miracle to see our child looking like Madison...Miracles do happen."

Madison was the apple of Nana's eye. She loved sports, particularly catching softball and point-

guard basketball. In addition, she was a committed Christian who related well to young and old as in befriending the new little school mate Will who was two years her junior. And even Madison met "a girl that's 103 years old, and she is so nice." No wonder the real youngster smiled so much, thus the nickname "Smiley."

Madison was definitely in the eyes of her peers, too. Shortly after her death in tribute the Martin Middle School football team wore the number 7 on their helmets; that was Madison's basketball and softball jersey number. Actually in mid-April 2012, the Martin Westview High School softball team honored her with its fourth annual Maddie Memorial Softball tournament.

Little wonder that Madison's death ushered in Sheila's journey of grief, characterized by the chapter title, "My Dark Maze of Grief." Despite the loss, she was so wonderfully blessed by the most precious relationship and memories. Still she cried, "Please, God, show us glimpses of your Joy; mercy is needed by all." Surely a griever can comfort other grieving ones. Of course, it did not help that there were earlier some dysfunctional aspects in the family. Understandably at moments the world was much too present for her to find more relief. Once she could move forward she did so "with Madison as my special guide of how precious life is. She did it right and with style."

Sheila claims not to be a writer. Well, in her mind and general experience, no, but a reader sees a well-crafted manuscript covering so many facets of life and death and grieving so deftly. Yes, each person responds rather differently in grieving; yet,

enough similarities exist to gain from other's written thoughts. While expressing and examining her grief, likewise Turner shows the continued profound development of her Christian beliefs in a journey of faith. At least two-thirds of the way through the text, she identified considerably with the emotions and conclusions of "It Is Well with My Soul." That grand hymn, played at Madison's funeral, was penned by Horatio Spafford who tragically lost four daughters in an 1873 shipwreck. "When peace like a river attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll, Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul....And, Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight" Miracles do happen!

Dr. Marvin Downing serves as the JPHS Treasurer and has been a guest speaker for JPHS meetings on occasion. He has often been a contributor to the Journal. Downing and his wife, Sandy, live in Martin, Tennessee.