

Christmas Day 2016.

I'm sending this to all of you to thank you this Christmas day for your love and support through this difficult time of Tricia's sickness and of her home going. Early Christmas morning I could not sleep and realized it had been 30 days since she passed away. I've written this poem because I'm so thankful for God's miracles that helped her live as long as she did. Thank you for your help, prayers, gifts and being there for me in this difficult time. It's because of Jesus humbling Himself and coming to earth that we celebrate this day. We will all be united with our loved ones for eternity. For me it is a sad Christmas for I hoped and prayed Tricia would be better by now. But there is joy in knowing that because of Christmas and Jesus' coming, I'll be with Tricia once again.



In Jesus our resurrection, Russ

### 30 days

It's been 30 days since from strokes you died,  
It's been 30 days since I released you to leave my side.  
It's been 30 days that I've had pain deeper than I've ever known,  
No. When we broke up at college a deep pain in my heart was shown.  
It was pain with black depression so very real,  
It was as bad as this is, but only five days did it steal.  
For out of it came our love for 49 years,  
Even though at times we were saddened by tears.  
For many times your body was broken by illness,  
That now resulted in final, painless stillness.

It's been three years from a stroke that first did come,  
You nearly died but continued to live some.  
I am so glad I got that extra time to live with you my wife.  
Even though your body was many times in strife,  
To hear your slowed voice every day and such,  
To discuss issues with you that meant so much.

To go on long walks and see the wind in your hair so gold,  
To feel your touch and kiss your lips that were sculptured bold,  
To cuddle on the couch and talk about the day ahead,  
Classes to teach or people to meet to hear what was said.  
The little things of daily life like seeing you around the home,  
Would inspire me many times to write you a special poem.

It's been two years since an Adventure Safari we did make,  
It was a fun adventure when we traveled long ago to Mono Lake.  
Bacteria by the millions did create white calcite towers high,  
At Yosemite Park we saw the waterfall that, unfortunately, had gone dry.  
The long drive home with a quiet meal was such a great delight,  
The final sunset of the week was a wonderful red/gold sight.

It's been over a year since we moved to our new house,  
It was going to be our retirement bungalow to share with my spouse.  
There we would sit and reminisce about adventures over the years,  
It cannot happen now, but I'm so glad you are no longer in pain and tears.

It's been seven years since we thought the Museum would be made soon,  
You were so gracious to let me build it in the living room.  
Then you contacted Jay Hardy to ask to rent a space,  
I was locked up so tight that I couldn't call to make my case.  
You my communicator, were not afraid to ask to see what he would do,  
You opened the doors for me to make our dream come true.

It's been 15 years since to California we migrated,  
It changed our lives and you lived longer in a milder climate.

It's been 49 years since you said "I want you, I need you, I love you,"  
No. It's been 30 days as you said the same thing before you died.  
You cannot come to me again but I will go to you,  
At the Marriage Supper of the Lamb I get the first dance too.

It's been a long time since we were passionate together, too,  
Now It's been an hour since I cried over you.  
No, it's been two minutes since I cried and missed you so much,  
It's been one minute since I last thought of you and your touch.

I did not want to leave you when you died with hand in mine,  
I wanted to stay beside you and not let you go this time.  
I can only do that in eternity, with your body free of strife,  
I celebrate Christmas for the birth of Jesus and his gift of eternal life.  
I celebrate Christmas because of the gifts God gave me through you,  
Those gifts touched my body, soul and spirit because we were two.

I would not have felt God's forgiveness so dear,  
If you had not forgiven me for some dumb thing I did in fear.  
I would not have experienced God's unconditional love and grace,  
If I had not experienced your unconditional love from your shining face.  
The same is true for joy, gentleness and your beauty fine,  
That God gave so generously through you to be mine.

All these were given by God to me from you,  
Tricia, you were an extension of God's grace and mercy, too.  
By understanding you and your gifts to me,  
I understood God's working, for from sin to set me free.

It's been 30 days and your life and love burns deep in my heart my dear,  
It's been 30 days which have seemed so long without your presence here.  
It's been 30 days that God has helped me through so much pain,  
Writing to you and reading these thoughts has helped me remain sane.  
It will be years un-numbered when together we'll be in eternity,  
Our time will come to be united as one flesh again in our maturity.

My ring says it all "Love U 4 eternity" in my heart,  
Your soulmate, Russ, for in the future soon we will not be apart.