

A Sisters's Remembrances

By Annie Hathaway

Upon the Occasion of the Memorial Service of Her 23 Year Old Brother
Daniel Capell Rabenhorst (March 11, 1982 - May 14, 2005)
May 20, 2005

I miss my brother so much already. I miss having him here to make me laugh, I miss the way he played with my son Aiden and read to him and held him and the way he talked to him. The last day we spent with Daniel, he was reading to Aiden who was seated on his lap, and speaking to him in the most gentle, baby-friendly voice that only a guy like Daniel would not be embarrassed to use in public. I miss Daniel's smile that always reminded us so much of my grandfather's smile.

I also miss Daniel's future that we were looking forward to. I couldn't wait to see him excel in golf and school and I always wanted Daniel to teach me how to play golf because he was such a wonderful teacher,... and even more importantly... a wonderful encourager. He was so tender with me, and I knew that even though I would have been horrible at golf, that he would have made me feel like I was the Best - Worst player in the whole world! Golf was such a gift and passion of his and I wish that I could've witnessed it first-hand - as so many of you all did!

I was also SO looking forward to meeting his future family, .. And I guess I always assumed that I would get to share family gatherings with him, have Daniel to laugh with about old family memories, and have a sibling to grow old with when our parents had gone on before us. It is so hard when a son has to go on before his parents. It seems even more unnatural than death already is.

I have too many fond memories of Daniel to list out loud, but one of my favorite memories of time with my brother was on Sunday afternoons. Growing up, Sunday was the day that our family had set apart to have a special focus on God and was also set apart as a family day. Daniel was always so busy with soccer, basketball, wrestling, swimming, playing with all of his friends, or just out fishing or golfing...I felt like I hardly ever saw him. So I can remember really looking forward to Sundays because it was family day and I KNEW that I would have quality time with my brother.

In the early years, we spent "nap times" on Sunday afternoons sitting in our doorways and flying paper airplane notes to each other because we weren't allowed to make any noise during nap time. I'm sure that we probably wrote about really dumb things, but I can also remember when we had something very important to share...especially something that we didn't want mom or Dad to know about, we would always preface the statement with "Ya promise not to tell?" and once we had received a confident "yeah" in reply, we would go on to share our deepest secrets which were easier to write on paper airplanes than to say out loud.

In later years, we spent Sunday afternoons just hanging out together, laughing at each other, making fun of each other. And myself being a person that has always had low self esteem, Daniel was the only person who I didn't mind making fun of me because he always did it in such

a loving and tender way that I never felt threatened. I knew it was his way of loving me and I always felt loved when he would tease me. I felt more comfortable around Daniel than anyone else because he always made me feel loved and respected, as his older sister.

And sometimes the teasing led to playful wrestling in the family room while Mom and Dad were preparing dinner. I loved wrestling with Daniel because I was allowed to wrestle like a girl and he always let me break all of the rules of wrestling. I would pinch, bite his hands, and in desperation, resort to facetiously screaming like I was in pain just so that he would let go....so that I could make my next move.... anything I could think of to try to fight back. —... And the best part of wrestling with my brother was that ultimately, he would always let me win. When I wrestled with my Dad as a child, he would never let me win....and my husband still won't let me win. But Daniel always let me win. That was one of the ways he loved me. He always let me think that I was stronger than him, even though I never really was.

Finally, one of my favorite memories of Daniel is a tape recording of him singing at about three years old. In our daily family devotional time, our parents would teach us the words to hymns and we would learn them by heart even before we could read so that we could sing along in church. This next hymn that we are about to sing in the service is the hymn that was Daniel's favorite. He had the verses and the tune memorized even as a three year old. When he was three and I was five, we had no idea what all of these words meant, but we knew them by heart and Daniel would always request to sing this hymn. My family can still remember his little hand raising at such a young age and requesting that we sing "Why should cross and trial grieve me?" which seemed at the time such a heavy song for such a little guy.

We had no idea way back then how meaningful this song would be to us today as we remember Daniel. He sang these words as a three year old and in his little mind, he believed them and meant them. I think throughout his life, these words were the cry of his soul, even if unspoken by his mouth. And I am glad that we can sing them today as the cry of our own hearts as we miss Daniel and wish he was still here with us.

We do believe, as Daniel sang with his own mouth, that "death cannot destroy forever", that death is God's way of delivering us from the tears and fears that we experience so often here on earth, and that as death does "close life's mournful story", that it indeed simultaneously opens the door for us to "enter heavenly glory."

We will continue to miss Daniel as long as we are living here on earth and temporarily separated from him, but I do not pity him, for Daniel is the one that is now free from the pain and anguish of this life, and he is now full of joy and freedom as he rests in heavenly glory.