

MY SUNFLOWER GIRL

LOSS, GRIEF AND GLORY

DYFAN WILLIAMS

© 2019 Dyfan Williams. All rights reserved.

ISBN 978-1-78397-259-3

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The Evangelical Movement of Wales works in both Welsh and English and seeks to help Christians and churches by:

- running children's camps and family conferences
- providing theological training and events for ministers
- running Christian bookshops and a conference centre
- publishing magazines and books.

Bryntirion Press is a ministry of EMW. Past issues of EMW magazines and sermons preached at our conferences are available on our website: www.emw.org.uk

Published by Bryntirion Press, Waterton Cross Business Park, South Road, Bridgend CF31 3UL, in association with:

EP Books (Evangelical Press), Registered Office: 140 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, Co Durham DL3 7RT

admin@epbooks.org www.epbooks.org

EP Books in the USA are distributed by:

JPL Books, 3883 Linden Ave. S.E., Wyoming, MI 49548

order@jplbooks.com www.jplbooks.com

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	xv
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xix
<i>Preface</i>	xxi
1. Beginnings	1
2. Emergency	6
3. Shock	11
4. Operation	16
5. Groaning	24
6. Miracle	32
7. Please!	39
8. Darkness	45
9. Struggle	53
10. Escape	57
11. Anger	63
12. Longing	72
13. Why?	79
14. Sharing	86
15. Mystery	92
16. Mourning	98
17. Futility	104
18. Heaven	109
19. Italy	117
20. Glory	122

1

BEGINNINGS

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!

— WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

I sat in the corner, like a silent spectator, and stared at the screen, but inside I was praying and willing the figures upwards into the 'safety zone', as the nurse had described it. White-coated medics, wearing anxious expressions, flocked around the bed. My fears, like a see-saw, rose and fell with those numbers. The heart-beat

was weakening. I thought of those who would be praying for us: my parents, Caroline's parents, our brothers, sisters and friends. Was this scene real, or just some terrible nightmare? How would it end? I fought to suppress that terrifying train of thought and re-focused on the monitor. Finally, with a heroic effort from Caroline, along with the doctor's assistance, our first baby was born! The long, protracted labour, with all its pain and fear, gave way to relief and rejoicing!

In this way Megan Ruth Williams entered this world and our lives, at precisely 1.53am on March 8th 1993. I remember holding her for the first time, her tiny face protruding from the standard issue orange hospital blanket, her eyes barely open. I remember hearing her first cry—not angry or fretful, but gentle, delicate, like the bleating of a new-born lamb. Wonder and excitement enveloped me as I gazed down at this precious, tiny form. Was she really mine? Could it be true? We were the proud parents of a beautiful daughter. I was a father!

Driving home through empty streets at about 4am, with little regard for speed limits, I was possessed by joy. Spontaneous praise to the Lord welled up within me for his goodness and mercy: Caroline and Megan were safe and well. It was a miracle. *Megan*: the sound of her name was just beginning to flow naturally from my lips. How different the outcome might have been! On many

subsequent occasions, suddenly aware of our great privilege to be parents, I would ask myself, “Why should the Lord have given her to us?” She was not ours by right, but a gift from God. After a few hours’ sleep the day began with phone calls to so many glad and grateful recipients of our good news. I recall pushing Megan in the buggy for the first time. In the local park there was an avenue of cherry trees and in the brilliant sunlight of that March day it was as though their vibrant, pink blossom, like a candyfloss celebration, was displayed just for us. Somehow, everywhere nature’s colours shone significantly brighter. These were blessed and happy days, days when I began to view the world through Megan’s eyes and felt what William Wordsworth had tried to capture in his poetry, the extraordinary in the ordinary.

Sunflowers

During those years as a young family, we usually holidayed in Wales. Pembrokeshire was a favourite destination, with its beautiful beaches and gorgeous greenery. We always went with our good friends, Wes and Karen, mutual friends who had brought us together. They had married a couple of years before us, and had also settled in Chorley. It was not planned but our children came along consecutively and we became very