

GRIEF FINDS ME ANYWAY

I don't like grief. I'm not a wallower. I'd rather get on with it. But grief finds me anyway ... everyday, nonetheless.

I'd rather cross a busy New York street than walk down the block with grief, but it follows me around like an unsavory character, dogging my footsteps, ready to jerk me back by the collar when I'm least aware.

"Happy? You think you're happy today?" It admonishes me with an ugly snarl. I pause and the grief sneaks through me, slicing through my chest, sucking out my breath.

It doesn't take much for grief to gain a foothold—the slightest glimpse of a child with the same curly black hair as my son, a song on the radio, a boy on a bike or skateboard. Sometimes I look for my son in the rearview mirror, hoping to catch a glimpse of him in the back seat, but he's never there ... just the grief, waiting to pounce.

My son's friends from grade school stop by from time to time. I drink in their faces, remembering the good times, the laughter in the house, never revealing the pain of seeing them taller and mature, while my son remains forever 11.

Yes, grief visits me every day, uninvited, and I forever yearn for the little boy with the curly black hair.

Claudia Perry
Fall 2004