

Reclaiming the Honor of Our Ancestors

Margriet Boom

Ever since I was little, an intruder would occasionally crawl into my life. It was like a tornado that wiped out everything in its path. Thus, for as long as I can remember I interacted - fortunately for short periods- with mental illness. I felt it poke through my skin, get into my pores, invade me, and filling me with its unsurpassable emptiness, its ever present absence, its puzzling pain. Although it didn't take me over, it affected my father, someone I loved so much. I would have given anything to be able to make it disappear forever.

It did not come frequently, but I could foretell its arrival. I would see it getting closer, cautiously but unmistakably, making me powerless in its presence. I knew its stench- that of someone who hasn't used a hairbrush in days. I was familiar with its appearance: the darker circles around the eyes, the fixed facial expressions, the grimace that made others wither as we tried to decipher something that made no sense, like the petrified expressions that seemed to last for centuries. I knew its sounds: the endless walking that lead nowhere, its indefatigable night dance, offering no rest, no truce, no relief.

I would have breakfast with it in the morning, dreading the sunrise that would bring the challenge of a new day laid to waste. I would have lunch listening to the heavy breathing that was unsuccessfully trying to calm the accelerating fantasies and the terror of not knowing his own body. I laboured like a slave trying to organize from the outside something that was impaired on his inside. I recognized the heavy and weary pacing, going round and round, looking without really being able to see, nor being able to listen on account of an internal noise that couldn't be silenced.

Many times his intolerable anguish, his inexplicable reason, and his interminable sorrow. invaded me. And I understood why at times sometimes people don't want to live any more and why death can be welcoming.

When I realized it was a recurrent intruder and that against my wishes and those of my siblings it always returned, I decided to try to decipher it and thus I walked at its side looking for a place to accompany it, a dwelling where to inhabit or to merely, exist. Thankfully, the mental illness gave me "compassion", that beautiful capacity of being able to feel with the other, to want to hold his fragile self, his painful existence. Thus, from the deepest affections of my childhood I held mental illness in my arms as a companion that would come and go with the months and as the seasons went by. Although I cannot say that I appreciated it, I did learn to look it in the eye, to avoid jumping to conclusions, to tolerate it and to hide away when its presence hurt more than I could understand without too much confusion. .

Thus, I grew up the daughter of a talented and endearing man whom occasionally fell ill. I kept him company. I gained so much from him each and every day that I wasn't able nor had any desire to leave him when his mental illness temporarily ensnared him.

Seeking solutions we visited wise men- counselors of human destiny- because we no longer wanted him to suffer from that damage, which suddenly snatched him only to return him months later worn and weary. He, who was always comforting and consoling us and was the proprietor of so many wise words, deserved better.

Seeking to understand this, I studied until my eyes seemed to break trying to explain to myself the way of the experts, but this did not lead to anything changing. It just happened with the seasons of the year, with each departure, with each change. And I would frown at my hands, trying, according to the explanations that the experts had offered us, to find the moment where this malignancy had escaped and injured him so much, stealing for awhile his charm, his kindness and his sensibilities.

Thus, his mental illness created in me the need to always help him and to help myself through his weeping. However, this was not all that my father was, although the experts told us so. Weren't his laughter, his dancing, his poetry, his generosity and wisdom much more real? His beautiful charm that so many of us loved so much. It always returned, like a promise, as a gift... as the certainty that somewhere he continued to live and could survive the attacks of this mighty enemy. He was always reborn; although very tired, he was more secure each time and more human.

In the middle of this struggle, we held our hands together even though I could not know then what seems so clear today, and that is what I want to tell you about.

We seemed to be losing my father's legacy until I had a conversation that changed this forever. We (his daughters and sons, pupils, friends and wife) all knew that his existence had been good for us even though we had all been through the painful experience of his illness. If we tried to honestly reach a conclusion, his presence had enriched our lives: his children, students and co-workers all felt the same way about that .. But it was very hard to keep that feeling without mutilating his story. We generally put forward his kind and admirable side: his books, his generosity, his well-known scientific work or his profound philosophical and spiritual vision of life. There was an unspoken agreement to keep the attacks of the powerful intruder a secret. There was also the incomprehensible terror that merely mentioning its name would be wrong or might invoke like an omen for its arrival. Even worse, we had the terrible fear that it would seize someone else. After all, it had already taken control of my

father temporarily and of my sister in a more permanent way. It was a dangerous enemy, one that wasn't easy to speak about, for when we did, even after my father's death, such speaking seemed to continue to deplete his richness. As soon as the mental illness was mentioned, all of my father's contributions were diminished. His mental illness kept taking over and destroying the value of our family treasures, and kept on making us feel different, inadequate and estranged. Hiding it made us feel protected although mutilated. Talking about it made us sense something was taken away from us: we felt misunderstood, judged, and unable to integrate what his struggles had generated in him as well as in ourselves.

In older civilizations, the legacy of the ancestors was the cornerstone for spirituality and betokened the possibility of good lives for future generations. The confusion I felt did not allow me to be a worthy bearer of my father's kind existence. I was unable to see beyond my mere idealization of him in any way which would allow me to integrate his struggles against illness as well as his valuable vision of the world. It was only after a conversation with my father through David Epston that I could inherit his legacy and make it mine.

I felt very proud of my father: he was a well-known doctor who spoke seven languages and danced like a worthy Caribbean man. He was smart and affectionate but at the same time marked by the presence of his illness. If what the specialists said was true and all these abilities were only mechanisms allowing my father to fight back against his illness, his struggles were herculean. I did not want to deny he had a problem, but why did we have to ignore such attempts on his part and explain his richness as merely reactions of his psychopathological structure? Why did they snatch a part of myself by destroying my father who had been the foundations on which I constructed my affections, my trust, my ability to belong? All I had learned from my father was taken away from him. What mental illness hadn't done while he was alive was now being done to his memory as others interpreted his attributes simply as consequences of his illness. Thus, this mental illness became the great sovereign of the story and by trying to conquer it, the army we had called to dethrone it actually became its faithful ally.

From then on, his legacy remained hidden and mutilated. Broken and devalued. I knew that my father's presence had been a most fortunate occurrence in my life and I had learned to keep this certainty to myself and a few other people, therefore resolving this matter against the odds for the time being.

However, I wasn't really satisfied with this outcome. Then suddenly at a workshop that David Epston was presenting at the International Conference of Narrative Therapy and Community Work(Oaxaca, 2005), we were offered an chance to engage in a live interview before our colleagues on a situation that we

felt we had been able to solve somehow. Honestly, the struggle between my pride and my shame resurfaced but the caring and respectful way in which David had interviewed another colleague had moved me deeply. I was also intrigued by the new knowledge I could obtain. By now, I had learned to make my own mind up and knew I would feel comfortable with my answers in such a safe set of circumstances. Opening up all this history disturbed me, but this warm and ingenious way to reconstruct the story of my companion drew me to the prospect of this interview format like a magnet. It was then that this beautiful conversation started, a conversation which led me on a magical journey through time, enabling me to sit on my father's lap again..

From the start, the conversation was a turning point, a detonator.

“What did these psychotic crises do to your father?”

For the first time someone could see it clearly. My father was not the crisis. They were the problem but they were not all he was. My father was much more than that and we had suffered his crises together. This simple question made a radical change. I felt like I was suddenly transported to another dimension of analysis. Someone from outside was helping me retell an event in which I had been involved. In my previous tellings of this event my father, the person I identified most with since my childhood in an instant became unrecognizable. Then I had wondered if I had done something to cause this? Had he done it because he didn't love me? Was my father really not the sweet and nice man I imagined? Were his love and warmth fake? Accepting any of these not only made me accept the painful existence of the mental illness, but also took away from me all the gifts he had bestowed upon me. . Another explanation would have been the existence of a character who had caused the crisis. Was it me, my mother, siblings, or someone from work. Someone's honor had to be sacrificed to rescue my father. Either way, I suffered.

Neither could or had provided any comfort to me, yet suddenly this irresolvable dilemma was solved by the simple way of asking a question. So many years of studying psychology and neurology, which had allowed me to find some understanding for these crises, were summarized in a few sensible words. But here no one was culpable, no one was accused and there was nothing to heatedly argue/ They were not necessary.

Right from the start, my father's dignity - as well as that of my family's and my own - were all being preserved. There was no need to choose amongst us. Now it didn't bother me to talk about the endless demands and limitations that we suffered due to his illness, because I could still feel worthy, much like any other person whose father didn't suffer in the way mine did. . I felt like any one of my friends. After all their fathers also suffered headaches, colds, ulcers. One simple question gave me back the chance to be an ordinary person. One simple question returned to me the same rights as others to have feelings and

fantasies. It made my words as valuable as the next person's, for they were no longer the words of a daughter desperately seeking the father she never had. My words were validated in a new universe of meaning. I felt like I was getting my voice back, now able to narrate the events as its subject, not its object. I allowed myself to narrate my story, and forbade others to tell it.

David's question made me a citizen in the world of normal people, where I had always felt like a trespasser, using my skills to trick others as to my citizenship. I had always felt like I had taken a place, one in which I did not belong. Yet with his question David was making me feel welcome there. All of this because of one question. It was a revolution from my inside out.

"What did the crises do to your father?" David asked me again, probably beginning to realize the enormous whirlwind that was growing in my head. At the same time he provided a suitable gap for me to answer.

I replied free from doubt: "They made him distant and mad, sad and untrusting". I wasn't afraid to tell him. For the first time I was able to confidently complain about the crises and to speak of all the pain that they caused me because the crises were not who my father was. I could let my heart speak. "They made him lose all the things that brought us closer... He was not aggressive, but the expression on his face hardened. His usually kind features grew tough, his easy smile disappeared. His happiness and his music stopped. The crises made him get angry about almost anything, nothing like the tolerance he had taught us every day. They made him resentful and mean. I would get scared when he had one. He wouldn't take his medication and that just made the recovery longer, lasting up to three months. I would try to convince him to take it and I would get angry and anxious. Everything was so hard. I was afraid that he would do something stupid such as crossing a street without looking or light a match at a service station. When he went out on trips, he almost always had a crisis. I think that losing contact with his daily world disorganized him a lot."

"When he experienced a crisis, he became extremely vulnerable and tuned out. He wasn't even able to take care of his personal hygiene. I didn't like my classmates and friends seeing him that way as I was embarrassed. Later I felt guilty about being embarrassed, since I loved him so much."

"The expression on his face would change so much that his peaceful and generous gaze became that of a young child in the middle of a battlefield, seeking refuge from a hostile and dangerous situation. His beautiful face became distant. He stopped eating and seemed to deteriorate."

There were so many things I had kept inside of me; they seemed to be emerging unstopably. But the fact that David was not looking for someone to blame allowed me, for the first time ever, to talk about what went on during his crises without feeling required to defend him. For the first time I did not feel split

between being able to talk about my pain and feeling worried that I wasn't respecting his memory.

David's question allowed me to simply be a person talking about her pain without having to worry about keeping my father's dignity. I could tend to my own wounds, as my father was safe. Because no one was attacking him, I could fearlessly but painfully tell about how different he was in those moments. I could tell how it felt to lose contact with his loving care and how the crises generated fear and shame in me. I could talk about my own pain without having to worry about harming him with my complaints. It was the two of us against the crises, we were a team, as always, and it felt good to be able to say all this for the first time in my life, to let all the pain out. This conversation generated a new perception of an old reality, and that liberated us all. I could breathe deeply. I could cry my eyes out, could be weak and fragile, could need and ask to be cared for. I could talk about how much these crises hurt me too and how they had aggravated my fear and insecurity. Since I didn't need to protect my father's memory, I could take care of my own limitations and needs.

"Was there any way your father could help himself to get over these crises?"

This was another detonator. My father stopped being a disabled person and instead became someone able to do something.

This question alone regarded my father differently- now he was being honoured and respected.. His resources, which were many, were not being diminished or considered mere compensating acts. They were now useful tools. This change was generated within me even before I could utter a response. This was the first time that an expert on human behavior referred to my father with respect and warmth. I felt deeply thankful. My father's spirit seemed to be with us now in the way of other cultures, now that he was satisfied that his memory was being treated respectfully.

I had a simple and fast answer.

"Every morning, he would wake up really early, at five thirty, and would read books to cultivate his spirit. He read Gandhi a lot, but also Martín Buber, Theillard de Chardin and in his later years the Dalai Lama. He used to say we should discipline ourselves the same way as weight lifters do..Both his reading and meditation gave him inner peace."

"My father also said that love for others had to be shown in concrete acts. And that these times of reflection allowed him to realize he had given too much importance to something that didn't warrant it".

"When I got up to go to school, I remember seeing him with his eyes closed and a book on his lap in the dim light of dawn inside his study. When he heard my

steps he would only raise his eyes, smile and return to his reading. I knew I shouldn't interrupt him, but his gaze was his way of greeting me."

"My father would take us to school and then go to work. When I grew up, I started going with him to the hospital where he worked whenever I had no classes. He was a well-known doctor, loved by his patients. He was a gastroenterologist who had read a lot about psychoanalysis. He used to say that it is in the stomach where many emotions were felt and that many of his patients needed more than just medicine to get better."

"Work was another one of the tools he used to overcome his crises. When he was having one, as soon as he started working, he recovered. I think that curing others helped him cure himself. Maybe that's where my calling for neuroscience and the brain come from, as well as the conviction that healing is a process that is better achieved with company, but that finally each person needs to do it by himself or herself..

"Was your father a thinker...a spiritual man for whom values were important?"

This was another detonator. My father was a spiritual man. His mental illness did not make him an unkind or unworthy man.

The psychopathological interpretations had created in his mind some dark, unconscious and embarrassing intentions that I either tried to resist or felt so ashamed of that I would become terrified. They made him unrecognizable to those who lived with him yet matched the specialists' theory. There was no way we could question this: we took it as given. .

Then suddenly, one question validated all that I had been unable to achieve despite my two thousand arguments. I had inadvertently entered a new reality, another chain of events. The value of his spiritual capacity was given as a premise in this new reality.

"My father", I replied, " was a man for whom kindness was a very important value." Needless to say, I wasn't able by then to utter a complete phrase without being interrupted by my endless tears.

"Which values do you find in yourself that came from the spirituality your father promoted in you?"

Now David was restoring my dignity as well.

"I think that my siblings and I have a humanistic orientation and we deeply believe in values such as generosity, compassion, love, tolerance, respect, freedom...

I would like to tell you of a memory that comes clearly to my mind now. Unfortunately in my country there is social injustice that should not be tolerated and that something needed to be done. My dad was very aware of that. One day while we were eating at my grandmother's a man came to her house. His clothes were dirty and he looked malnourished. Immediately, my father went out into the street with his dinner plate and gave it to him. My grandmother was about to serve more food to my father when he said to her: "No, Lolita (even though she was his mother-in-law, they loved one another very much) I wanted to share with this man that delicious food, which you make with so much love and he has come to share his hunger with me, so I can understand how he feels". I remember that in that moment I couldn't understand why my dad wouldn't have any more food when there was plenty more available. Later he explained to me that it was important not to forget that the life we enjoyed was not what everyone had, and that it was convenient to be reminded of this this by having experiences like this that allowed us to be aware we needed to do something to change the world's injustices"

"Do you remember which means your father used to transmit these values to you?"

This conversation was easy. David had caught the essence of my father and I could express myself openly and confidently.

"He used to read to us a lot", I answered. He read Gandhi, whom he greatly admired. He read about different religions and told us that God had a thousand names because he chose different ways to present himself to each person, one that matched his native language. That was the reason he read material from different religions and promoted in us respect for all kinds of spiritual practices."

"What time of day did your father pick to read to you? Was it at bedtime? Did you sit on his lap? Did he put his arm around you as he read?"

In that moment, a vivid image of my dad came to my mind in such a way that I could almost see him at his reading desk in his study.

"My father's aspect was that of an affectionate person. He had a warm smile. His displays of affection were patting our cheeks or putting his arm around our shoulder as we walked together. He generally read to us at times when the family was gathered or when someone needed his support. He would call you into his study and ask you a few questions."

"He never gave any specific advice. I can't say he was a practical man but he did help you think better. He would ask you questions to make you see some things he considered important but he would always conclude: "whatever you decide will be fine with me". He'd give you a hug full of affection and acceptance. I believe that the way in his illness had humbled him made him extremely tolerant

and understanding of people. There were times, though, when he could have used a bit more strength to face the daily challenges of a confrontation as well as a more realistic view of life. He was a bit of a romantic idealist. Sometimes I needed more practical advice than 'no violence' for the times when someone had stolen my lunch at school. Still he gave me what he could and that was invaluable to me".

"Do you remember the color of the book that your father used to read to you?"

Then I really felt like I was travelling through time. There he was, reading. Of course I remembered! The book had an orange hard cover. I had no doubt about it. It's cover was worn-out and the pages were underlined and were well and truly annotated. I now keep it as a treasure for it represents dialogues with him. He was there with me in my heart and mind. His presence was so clear and strong that his affection could no longer be diminished, not even by the false experts on human destiny.

This vivid memory made me confirm what I already knew but never allowed myself to express because I hadn't found anyone to share this reality with. My father's affectionate ways were not a reaction aimed at defending himself. They were as real as the people around me at this workshop, listening to my story and believing in this new reality. This dialogue with David enabled it. This truth was validated and affirmed, something that had never happened before. There was a place for it in the social world, not merely in my family.

It was also a close encounter with my father in which I could receive his love without any worries. I could now tell him about how his crises had hurt me without attacking him or without hurting him. His affection was liberated from all the diminishing interpretations and was finally available to me. His dignity was no longer at risk and I no longer felt required to give up my emotional needs.

Then, as if David seemed to realize my need to talk to my father, he asked my permission to 'take his voice' and speak for him for a moment.

-“Margarita, is there anything you'd like to ask your father? Anything you'd like to obtain from the wisdom he offered you? Could I 'use his voice' for a moment?"

In order to make it virtually real, David asked me queries such as- “what did your dad used to call you? , “what were some of his most common expressions?” , “what was his conversational style? and sought some other information about my present-day family, such as their names, ages, occupations and personal characteristics of each one of the members. And that's how my reunion with Ramón, my dad, began.

“I am very proud of what you have accomplished” he told me. “in both your personal and professional life. I can see a lot of what you and I worked on together”.

MARGARITA...IS THIS RIGHT?

I replied: “Dad, I love my life, my children, my husband, but I miss you... Sometimes I feel terribly overwhelmed, as if I had this enormous burden to carry. Each day I get more involved in the field of neurology and have found out that there are wonderful treatment options to regenerate brain functioning. . My sister Pilar is doing so much better and I wish you could see her. She interacts with us more each day, is happier and less anxious, but I feel like there’s so much work to be done that I’m always in a hurry. I know that this kind of treatment would have solved your crises forever. Now we can explain clearly what happens without having to make anyone feel guilty about it. And I feel like I lost my battle against time, as if I have found this too late as you were no longer here anymore. The answer came too late for you”.

“Why do you think that it came too late?” David asked speaking on behalf of my father and asked me to guess how my father might have replied.

I answered for my father: “That’s not the way things are. Actually I had to come first so that you learned that a mental illness is something that may tie us up but doesn’t destroy our human capacity and so you could approach the people you help with the empathy and closeness you wish someone would have shown us. No, honey, it’s the other way around. I think it’s good that Pilar is being aided by all this. I feel happy and at peace. As long as I lived I always worried that she would have inherited my condition. Someone will continue the work that you have started... do only your part, no rush, do what you can and enjoy, like I did, music and dancing... it’s not all about work, although I know we’ve both always liked our work. I feel happy to see you leading the life you are leading and to know that all of what we built together is still there inside of you. We can continue our conversations in my books, or any time you feel like it, for you will find me in your heart, where I live peacefully and happily, I am here with you...”

Strange as it may sound, I was very close to running and hugging David as a little girl would... and ever since that day he retains a special place in my heart.. Although I had talked to him just a few hours, he seemingly knew my internal world better than anyone... better that I had been able to understand myself. I was deeply thankful. Then we entered the final moment of our conversation, in which everything seemed to come together in a new story.

David asked me if it was okay if he used his own voice and left my father.. I agreed knowing that my father would always be there. He now asked in me in a relaxed voice:

“Have you been able to transmit these values to your children? What do you see in them that would make your father feel proud?”

All of a sudden his question allowed me to see my father as a Great Spirit that watches over the well being of the next generations. And I thought how important it is to hold with dignity the legacy of our ancestors. This interview wasn't only releasing me from the shame and guilt. It was recovering, for those who live, his legacy.

As I was writing this I read a book about Navajo culture. It is from this book that the title for my story comes. In it, Joseph D. talks about how important it was for him to find a picture of his great grandfather called “Horse Capture”. He talks about all that he was able to recover from his history and the legacy of his culture from recovering this photo. Joseph D. was very thankful to Craig the photographer who loved Indian culture and had taken these pictures which had now become invaluable in Joseph's life

Joseph D. wrote: “Horse Capture is with us in all our homes, it's presence helps us choose the direction that our lives take... Seeing it not only reminds us of our relatives but also reinforces our efforts as Indians to teach our children the customs of our ancestors” (Joseph D. Horse Capture)

I felt like Joseph D. My father's presence helped me remember who I was and where I'd come from, which was my group, my people, my culture' and I was no longer ashamed.

Just a few days earlier I had found amongst the many writings of my father one that moved me deeply. This is what he had written:

May 15th, 1978

***I am just a few days away from my trip to Madrid...
My depression has been overpowered by anxiety, I am afraid that words can't begin to describe how I feel.
On the days before my trip I've felt as if all my actions are useless. It seems like I am condemned to never be able to overcome this emotional state, which I feel limits me and shatters my intentions to spread my wings.
I think that if it weren't for my worshiping of God, I wouldn't be able to survive. I don't feel it as a virtue; I do it out of need. To be honest, I must accept that I worship you because it's convenient for me.
I don't think I could survive the desperation I feel when I think I could be dead tomorrow.
You probably know why I am emotionally disabled. I find it so confusing. How come I felt perfectly fine before taking lithium, and now that I am only***

taking it as a preventive measure, is when the depression and anxiety that had been buried for a long time attack me again?

I would like to know dear God, if there are any reasons why I shouldn't go on this trip to Madrid. I am still searching for the truth.

Now I had something to tell my father too. He had not been emotionally disabled. He had been an innovator who found in his spiritual work a way to deal with his illness. He was a man who had fought for preventing ill people from being diminished and stigmatized, a man who had tried to make room for all who suffered and one who had seen in frailty a road that lead to wisdom. His legacy could now be put into words with dignity. And we could now talk about it for it had an enduring place in our lives.

My father used to say to us:

“Human frailty can be an endless fountain of wisdom if we can accept it with humbleness, if we can open our minds to the knowledge that so many people build each day with hard work. Especially, if we can add to this effort a deep and sincere spirit of love, respect and understanding towards ourselves and those whom we meet along the way on this worthy attempt.

It would be unfair to overlook the fact that this legacy wouldn't have come down to us if it hadn't been for the generous and visionary presence of my mother. She was able to see beyond my father's illness and remain close to him, remembering his admirable side during his crises and helping him to overcome them. It was her who gave structure to his life and who demonstrated to us the importance of loyalty. She knew how important it was for us that she remained close to each one of us; she tried to protect us as much as possible from my father's illness by taking him to grandmother's while he wasn't well for as long as possible. I was finally able to see all this after the conversation with David. When I showed my mother the dialogue, she was able to give me the gift of sharing her view of the situation and her transcendent decision to remain by father's side after experiencing his first crisis. Our talk brought me closer to her and made me want to thank her deeply for having loved my father so much. My perception about my mother was also enriched by our conversation. This new reality informed my relationship with her too. When we organize a story, we change the way in which reality is perceived and interpreted.

David, through his approach had created a new way for me to interpret the events. He had created a new way to look at things. He had included in the spectrum colors that I had never imagined, This took place in a few hours. My universe of meanings had undergone a revolution. But most of all, my heart was profoundly thankful to David. I had recovered a picture of my father that could be hung like that of “Horse Capture”, in my living room. It allows me today to present myself as the proud bearer of his legacy.

My father keeps on teaching us through his notes, his writings. My children have a deep sense of empathy for emotional suffering, a calling for learning how the brain functions, and a conviction that the complexity of the emotional world demands our deepest humility and respect.

My father's legacy is part of our daily lives but now one which Armando, my husband, enriches, at times in similar ways and at times dissimilarly. His caring, structured and supportive lifestyle brings to us his parents' legacy, even though we're lucky to still have them here with us. His presence enriches our lives enormously and allows the legacy of our children's grandfather Ramón to find a live on in all our lives.

As an afterword, but not an end to this conversation which continues to generate new realities, I would like to share with you a song I wrote for my father.

The Echo of Your Voice

**The echo of your voice
Sits next to me
It lulls me to sleep like yesterday
It embraces me with your being**

**Somewhere in the soul
Where love lives
You know how to answer me
And I find you in my songs**

**And your warmth
And your belief in me
And those moments of togetherness
Won't leave**

**And your calming voice
And this love that embraces me
Your truth and certainty
Gives me strength to go on...
To feel you close by
Even though your not**

**It's not true that you aren't here,
Because you never go
And yet I wish at times
To be a child like before**

**Lean on your sleeplessness
Climb up your dreams
Snuggle in your advice
I find you in my longings**

**And your warmth
And your belief in me
And those moments of togetherness
Won't leave**

**And your calming voice
And this love that embraces me
Your truth and certainty
Gives me strength to go on...
To feel you close by
Even though you're not**

**I have to say
That I recognize in myself
Much of your journey
Of that which I observed in you**

**And your warmth
And your belief in me
And those moments of togetherness
Won't leave**

**And your calming voice
And this love that embraces me
Your truth and certainty
Give me strength to go on...
To feel you close by
Even though your not**

Margriet