

## The Afterlife

by Carol Moye

Rolling down the freeway at 90 miles an hour, top down, happy. What a great day for a ride! I'm enjoying a box of Jelly Bellies when I drop them. I bend down to save what's left and find myself about to run smack into an 18 wheeler. How dumb was that?!! I say the quickest prayer possible as I unsuccessfully try to stop my car.

"Help me Jesus!"

Next thing I know, I see my dad walking toward me without a limp. He looks great!

"Hey Knucklehead," he greets me with my pet name. "Looks like you weren't using your noggin'."

I smile the biggest smile ever. Obviously I am dead, but that's just fine with me.

It doesn't initially look anything like I imagined. Actually I realize that I am in my old neighborhood, approaching the house I grew up in. Some of my former neighbors are there also. The Tomblins wave as Dad escorts me back to our old home. I see Mr. Marshall too. We wave.

Dad says that everyone starts out at a familiar place, one where you felt loved. This is just an image really, sort of like a hologram, made to help with your adjustment.

Dad tells me what to expect in the afterlife. The biggest thing is that time really is relative. That takes some getting used to he says. The next thing is that no one owns anything, or anyone. We share everything, cling to nothing. Everything and everyone is ours forever. God just wants us to be happy. That's all he ever wanted. We were just slow to get it when we were mortals.

In moments we are transported to a glorious garden with trees of all kinds, filled with juicy fruits and nuts.

"Mine for the taking?" I foolishly ask.

"Yes, but the word, "mine" isn't used here. Get it out of your vocabulary."

I bite into the most amazing mango ever, juice dripping all over my clothes. Paradise indeed!

"This is the Eden God originally planned. This is how he intended for us to live before Adam and Eve made bad decisions."

"Does anyone ever get kicked out?" I ask. "If so, where do they go?"

"Unfortunately, it happens from time to time. God usually sends them back as an infant to start all over again."

"Sounds fair enough to me"

"God is always fair. Always has been. Always will be. Glad you're here. Looking forward to welcoming your mama when it's her time."

"What about her new husband? Whose wife will she be?"

"First of all, remember I told you that no one belongs to anyone. We all just appreciate each other's company. Secondly, not everyone gets to enter paradise. Some folk aren't ready, and will be sent back to try again, and again until they get it right. "

"Wow! I feel even more special now!"

"You are my child. Welcome home. "