

## WHERE DOES LOVE GO

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It was the letter Alan had been waiting for, daily checking the mail box for weeks. Now that he had it in his hand a feeling of fear come over him, 'was this the answer, was this the letter where, "finally someone understands what they did to me" he thought, "or is it just another one of those brush it to the side collection of meaningless words".

With the unopened envelope in hand he began to walk down the hallway. Not being a large house, the walk from the front door to the back of the house was only a short distance. It was a very old home, one in which he had grown up as a young boy. Halfway down the hallway he stopped, looked up and gazed at the pictures of yesteryear hanging on the old VJ walls. Smiling to himself, he could smell a hint of perfume from that yesteryear. It was all in his mind, that perfume hadn't been around for a long time.

Heading towards the back door he stopped in the kitchen the very last room that opens up from the hallway. Remembering the kettle had just boiled before he went out to the mail box, he walked over to the sink and poured himself a cup of strong black coffee. As he put the sugar into the coffee his hand began to tremble and spilt a few grains of sugar on the bench. 'Better clean it up' he said to himself. 'No.....I'll do it later'.

He looked outside through the open back door. It was a beautiful day and was always nice sitting on the back veranda. Now his real journey begins. Coffee and letter in hand he walked outside and sat at the table on the very edge of the veranda over looking the back paddock. It certainly was a beautiful day and he decided there was nothing the letter could say to take away any part of this beautiful day he has, right here, right now. 'Oh god', he thought, 'just open the bloody letter'.

Using the handle of the spoon he carefully tore open the envelope and began to read. His hands were still trembling and tears began to fall from his face. The tears pooled on the table. There was no crying, these were relief tears. After all these years, has the Defence Force finally recognised that Alan was brutally and sexually abused as a sixteen year old in the Navy. He looked up and stared out into the paddock for some time. He laid the letter on the table put the wooden pen holder on it, so the wind wouldn't blow it away. Grab his cup and strolled back into the kitchen.

Click, the kettle sprang to life and he started the cup of coffee process all over again without even thinking what he was doing. His mind was racing, racing so fast it was hurting. No one believed him as a young boy, everyone he told said he was lying. The base doctor kept giving him bottles of valium pills to take, his parents wouldn't even listen to him, his father beat him up in hospital telling Alan he was lying. They all abandoned him.

Walking back to the veranda table he noticed the wind was changing. That sudden rush of wind triggered a memory, a memory from long ago. He recalled a poem Louise would read to him, "*When the wind changes the message is clear, it's time to let yourself go and drift with the wind, wherever it takes you, feeling the peace and calmness it brings you, seeing that life is good, feeling the happiness.*" Alan picked up the letter went down the back stairs and walked towards the tree line at the southern end of the bottom paddock.

Taking a big breath he read out the letter in a loud voice hoping Louise would hear every word he said. The letter in part read, "*Mr Alan. I am satisfied that you suffered abuse at HMAS, that the abuse included abuse of a sexual nature and that there was mismanagement by the Defence in not reporting your abuse.*"

He read it out loud for a second time, he yelled the words out, even God would have heard it. He looked up into the blue sky, fell to his knees and cried, holding the letter to his lips and kissing the pages. He asked his God to share his joy with Louise, it would have meant so much to her.

Louise spent many days helping him write up the documents for the lawyers. It was a painful process for him, dragging up all the old memories and having to let someone else hear the dirty details. Not one living soul ever believed him, only God. Why would anyone now, was the continual taunt that messed with his head over the last forty years. Louise never hesitated in her belief of Alan.

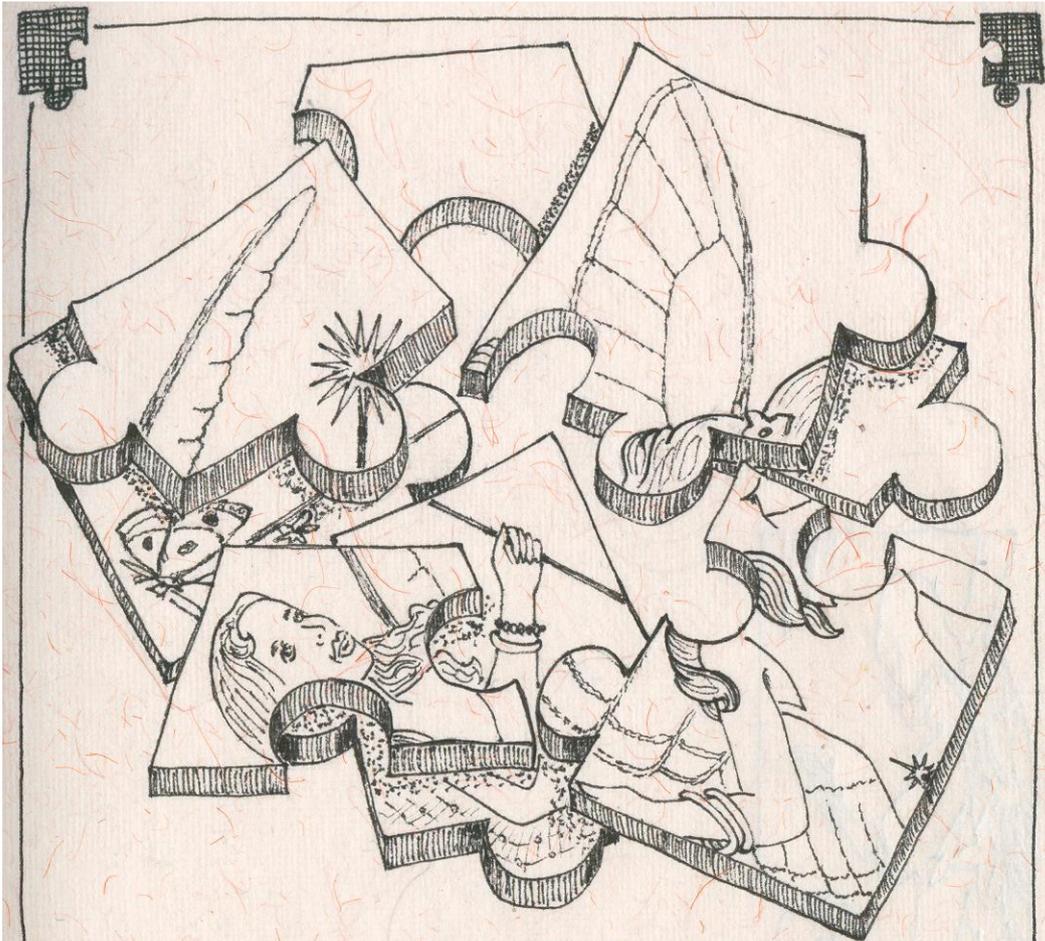
During this process she would take notes, type and never say anything. When ever she felt the moment was right Louise would give Alan inspiration and helped him survive the mental torture. There were times when Alan would become uncontrollably distraught and not wish to continue this cleansing journey. She would tell Alan to stick it out and that he should not allow them win. She would just smile and guide his spirit.

Alan wiped away the tears. Tears of relief, tears of belief and he knew some of the tears were feelings he had for Louise. Slowly stood up, put the letter in his pocket and strolled back to the house. This was a great day. He picked up his coffee cup and spoon from the table on his way into the kitchen. Cleaned up the sugar grains he spilt on the bench earlier in the morning and washed up. Carefully laid a tea towel over the dishes to let them air dry and thought of how he could celebrate this significant day. Maybe there will be no celebration, as they say, a story has no meaning if you have no one to tell it to.

There it was again, that pleasant smell, as if someone was walking through the place wearing amari. It was the same perfume Louise would some times wear on the few occasions they were together writing up the Defence documents. He once told her that he constantly used cologne and scented burners because it was the only way he knew how to rid himself of any smells that remind him of the maleness of the sexual abuse he received. Alan looked around, as he always did, hoping to see Louise, but today it was not to be.

Alan would often ponder on the question of where does love go. He decided it may never be answered. But on this day he had been inspired, he sat and penned a poem about how our life is a jigsaw puzzle and the question, the real question is, will we ever have all the pieces.

*Kenneth AA      December 2013*



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## Pieces

You do not have all the pieces to your puzzle  
For others are walking around with pieces in their pockets  
For some, puzzles are profoundly large, others just a mere few  
Some are easy, yet many are difficult to assemble, then one day  
Pieces of your puzzle are handed back to you by a dear old friend  
But can we say they are ever complete?