

CHAPTER 1

EPIGRAPH FOR JOY

Then bear a joy where joy is not,
Go, speak a kindly word in love.

—F. G. Lee

Joy's Diary

I was born on May 14, 1954, the fourth child in a family of six. My mother wanted to name me Joanne. With my birth, my parents were blessed with two sons and two daughters. My father wanted to name me Joy as befitted the occasion. My parents decided to christen me Joy Margaret.

By the time I was ten years old, my eldest brother, Eddie, had died from kidney failure; my baby sister, Grace Evangeline, had died from probable kidney failure, and my older sister, Carol, had had a kidney biopsy which resulted in a diagnosis of kidney failure.

My own kidney failure showed itself in the form of nephrosis when I was three. Signs of kidney failure showed up briefly when I was in elementary school, but I was in grade nine before definite signs of kidney failure were evidenced.

In 1964, when I was in grade five, I had scarlatina, a mild form of scarlet fever which left me somewhat weak. Although I was light and agile and could run swiftly, I had no endurance, and my strength in physical activities was short-lived. In volleyball, I could never get the ball over the net on my serve; in basketball, I would tire easily from running, and in baseball, the bat was always too heavy for me. I remember that once I was so proud because I had actually swung and hit the ball. However, the swing was so weak that the pitcher caught the ball immediately and I didn't even make it to first base.

Even with the lack of endurance, my goal in grade six was to get a senior athletic award. I was good in broad jump, relay, and in running short distances, and by staying with this type of activity, I made it. But not without a struggle.

There was a big schoolyard track that we had to run around four times in order to get our points. Timing played an important part. We went in teams of four. The job was to alternately jog and walk until the assignment was completed.

I started with the others, but very quickly I dropped to the back of the line. After the first round, I was far behind the others and very tired, but I was determined to see it through. With great effort, I jogged some, then walked some, but by the last lap I only had strength for a short walk. Long after the others had completed their lap, I came walking in—ashamed to know what my time was. I threw myself on the ground. My lungs were aching, my chest was heaving, and there was blood in my throat. The others couldn't understand why I was so tired with such a poor performance. At the time, I didn't think much about it. When grade seven came, though, I was completely excused from all physical education classes.

In 1968, when I was in grade nine, I was to learn the meaning of sorrow and the depths of grief.

Crystal, my younger sister by three years, and I were very close. We did everything together.

Since my father was a minister, church was an important part of our lives. It was very natural for us, when we were small, to play "church" on Sunday afternoons. We would go down to the basement to the playroom, which was a room that was filled with all of the essentials for little girls—dolls, cribs, dishes, doll clothes, baby carriages, and books.

After dinner, on Sundays, Crystal and I would march downstairs and dress our dolls in their best attire for 'church'. We then carried all of our dolls up to the main floor. If we were lucky and the living room was unoccupied, the chesterfield became the pews and the piano became the church organ. However, at most times, the steps that led upstairs were the pews and the hallway was our speaking platform.

We lined our dolls up on the steps. I would introduce Crystal as the junior choir director. She would then get up and sing as she directed the 'junior choir', usually made up of six dolls. Finally, I introduced Crystal for a solo, and then Crystal introduced me for a solo. Then it would be time to collect our dolls and head for home.

This was a weekly routine for some time. When company came, Crystal and I would always sit in the same chair. When it came to jelly beans, we would divide the beans color by color; and if it came down to one odd one left, that was bitten in two and shared.

When I had scarlatina, I was weakened; but when Crystal caught the disease from me, she had even more difficulty, and was never really strong after that.

By the time she was in grade four, kidney failure was very evident. At that time, my parents were unaware of the name, but her bones were getting weak, stiff, and painful, and she had difficulty walking. We learned later that she had developed "renal rickets". Because the kidneys were not functioning properly, the parathyroid glands were taking over and secreting a hormone called parathormone which was forcing the calcium out of the bones. The result was that the bones were becoming soft and painful. This was really rickets; only since it was caused by lack of renal or kidney function, it was called renal rickets.

Saturday was the day that we got our allowance. Crystal and I took the orders from the family for candy treats, and then headed for the local candy store. We did this summer and winter and enjoyed the walk.

We would go up the back alley, over a log, and then across a small field called McKernan Park. After crossing two connected streets we were at the local string of stores.

However, the time came when Mom said to me, "Maybe you better go to the store by yourself this time." And that was the last time that Crystal and I made our routine trek together.

I remember when Crystal had to start getting blood transfusions because her hemoglobin was constantly dropping due to kidney failure. This caused a condition of anemia which blood transfusions temporarily relieved by raising the red blood count.

I remember that Carol and I told Crystal that she would just have one small needle, and then the transfusion. How little did I know and understand at that time. Crystal's veins were small and it was hard to get a needle into her. Time and again she was poked for one transfusion. Sometimes her foot even had to be pierced. But she kept her suffering to herself and never spoke of the pain to walk or any other pain she suffered. I never knew what she was going through with low hemoglobin and bone disease until I, too, experienced everything firsthand in my own body.

Carol and I decided to give Crystal a little something everytime she needed a transfusion. One time it was popcorn. Another time it was a troll doll, and once it was a teenage doll.

Mom told me one day, outside on the patio, that Crystal didn't have long to live. I knew she had kidney trouble, but I never expected anything as serious as death. I just looked at Mom and said, "Is it that bad?" But I refused to believe it and blocked it from my mind. It just couldn't happen. Yet in my heart I knew it could.

My prayers confirmed what I knew in my heart to be true, yet denied with my mind. With childlike determination, I told God that Eddie and Grace were taken. Did Crystal have to be taken, too? My prayers ended with the plea, "God, don't let her die. Please don't let her die." Years later I was to understand why Crystal was allowed to enter eternity when she did and to thank God for his wisdom in taking her when he did.

One Sunday in January 1968, Crystal, Carol, and I were in our bedroom, making birthday cards for Mom. We were drawing birthday pictures on the floor with our crayons scattered round. Suddenly Crystal said, "I see two of you," and for minutes at a time, she began seeing double. Although I didn't know it at the time, her blood chemistry was going out of balance. But Mom and Dad knew and said that she would be going into the hospital in the morning.

We put our cards away and went downstairs to tell our parents that Crystal was seeing double. Crystal never finished that birthday card. Before the week was up she was dead.

That night, before she went into the hospital for the last time, as I was sitting in the living room in the evening, Crystal came and laid her head on my shoulder. I put my arm around her and leaned my head against hers. I remember thinking to myself, "What am I ever going to do if she dies?" and tears came into my eyes as I hugged her. Crystal turned and looked at me and said, "You're crying. Why?" I just shrugged it off as nothing. But I shall always cherish that moment when I think we both knew in our hearts what was coming but declined to express it. Yet more was said in those few moments without words than could ever be said with words.

On Monday morning Dad came upstairs and lifted Crystal out of bed. He and Mom took her to the hospital while Arthur, Carol, and I went to school.

Arthur and Carol took their lunch, because they were in high school, but Mom always made lunch for Dad and me as I came home at noon.

However, when one of the family was ill Mom sat by the bedside of the ill one day and night, sometimes enduring past exhaustion.

That week I came home and made lunch for Dad and myself, because Mom was at the hospital.

I'll never forget how heavy-hearted I was one day that week as I came home. I fixed beef noodle soup and sandwiches. As we were eating, I said to Dad, "I guess Crystal doesn't have very long to live." He replied, "What makes you think that?"

It turned out that at Dad's weekly Bible study some of the concerned parishioners had asked just exactly what Crystal's state of health was. Dad had told them that it looked as if Crystal had two weeks at the most. One of the parishioners had a daughter who was in my grade at school, although in another classroom. This parishioner had told her daughter the news. Her daughter had passed on the information at school. Consequently, one of my friends informed me.

Dad, when he heard this, was gentle with me and told me that it could be that she would rally and we might have her back with us for awhile longer. How I prayed that week! How I prayed for God to spare my little sister!

I didn't know at the time, but I found out later that when Mom and Dad brought Crystal in, Mom had alerted the top renal specialist at the University of Alberta Hospital. The specialist ordered bloodwork on Crystal's arrival and then assigned Crystal to his resident. The resident did not and could not know as much about advanced renal failure as the specialist. But the specialist doctor never even came to see Crystal once and showed no interest in her whatsoever. His nurse had told Mom that he would come; but then, when he saw Crystal's bloodwork results, he didn't bother.

Crystal came in on Monday and died on Friday. After she was dead, the head doctors showed interest in her—to do a biopsy. My parents refused.

Even being as young as I was, the specialist doctor is lucky I never met up with him because, if I had, there would have been one tremendous thunder and lightning session by one tiny thirteen-year-old girl!

I remember that on Friday night, Dad went to the hospital after supper. Mom was keeping her steady vigil there. He had told Carol that Crystal had gone into convulsions and the end was near. But to save me, I only knew that he would be going to see Crystal.

Yet I felt within me that things were not good. After they left, I turned on the television. The Smothers Brothers were on. Their humorous jokes seemed oppressive to me. I turned them off.

When Mom and Dad came home, I jumped for the door. "How's Crystal?" I asked. Mom quietly said, "Crystal has gone to heaven to be with Jesus." I just stared at her. Over and over again I cried out, "Not Crystal! No, not Crystal!"

Dad, Mom, Carol and I went into the living room as the tears began to fall. Arthur was next door babysitting; but as soon as he came home, he instantly knew what had happened. As we sat together, Dad raised Crystal's picture to the mantel where Eddie's and Grace's pictures were. "She's graduated to here now," he said. (The pictures of our loved ones that had passed on were on the mantel under the picture of Jesus that hung in the living room.)

Long after the others had stopped crying visibly, I sat in the corner of the chesterfield with my kleenex box, sobbing my heart out. It wasn't that I was grieving any more than the others; it was just that since Eddie and Grace had died when I was quite young, I hadn't yet learned to relinquish my sister's spirit into Jesus' hands until the day when we would all be reunited again.

The next few months were months that taught me about the pain of separation and the empty, achy feeling of grief and loneliness. Being young, these experiences were relatively new to me, and I felt them with great intensity.

Seeing the empty bed hurt, seeing the clothes hurt, and then always one would come upon some little reminder of Crystal which would bring on a new flood of tears.

At night I would dream that Crystal had come back. I would be so jubilant in my dreams and thank God that she wasn't dead after all. Then I would wake up to the reality. At times I dreamt that she came back and we were happy together. Then, suddenly she was gone. Once I dreamt that I was in the living room with her. She had on her furry-looking brown coat. She looked so cuddly in it that I went over and hugged her. That dream was a recreation of an actual experience.

In about March of that year, Mom and Dad could see that emotional stress was beginning to have an effect on my physical well-being.

I remember that Dad took me to school early in the morning one day for violin practice. As we were driving he told me that I mustn't grieve so

much for Crystal. He went on to tell me of how heavily he had grieved for his first-born son—my brother Eddie. But one day, God gave him a dream that gave him new release.

Eddie came from heaven and met Dad on earth. Dad was overjoyed and they spent time talking together. But then Eddie said, "I have to go now, Dad. I have to go to choir practice." And so he returned to heaven.

Dad knew that Eddie was in glorious eternity with Jesus. He was experiencing what the Bible speaks about in I Corinthians 2:9, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him."

*But he realized after this dream that now Eddie would not want to come back even if he could because he had tasted of the glories of heaven and of life in eternity with his Savior, Jesus Christ. Dad told me that they couldn't come back to us; but one day, we could go to them. At this time, too, Mom gave me a tiny book entitled, *A Little Book of Comfort*.*

One night, many months later, I was lying in bed, and from the depths of my heart I cried out, "Oh God, I miss that kid!" At that moment, I can honestly say that "heaven came down and glory filled my soul." A wonderful peace came into me and I felt that my heavy burden was being rolled away.

I began to think of Crystal, not as dead and gone, but very much alive and happy in heaven. She had taken the step that we all must take—that of leaving our physical bodies to enter into the spiritual realm of eternity. For her, it had come after less than eleven short years.

In March of that year, I began having pain in my ankle. I would be walking to school, and all of a sudden my ankle would get very painful to step on. Then it would swell up. I had to stay off my feet for the pain to leave.

Dad felt that maybe I had a sprained ankle and gave me some Absorbine Junior to rub on. But shortly after this, my other ankle began to swell in the same manner.

Our church was blocks from my home. On Saturday mornings my girl friend and I walked to church for Confirmation classes. I remember that halfway to the church, my ankle swelled up and it was painful to walk the rest of the way. It was hard to concentrate on the lesson that day because of the throbbing in my foot. After that, Dad drove me to class.

I also began to feel tired and listless. Mom realized that my kidneys were not functioning properly, and so she contacted our pediatrician. He,

in turn, recommended me to the head renal specialist at the University of Alberta Hospital at the time.

My sister, Carol, had been under his care for some time. All through the years, from the time I was in grade three, Carol had been under doctors' care for renal failure and was in and out of the hospital. Throughout my childhood, there was fear many times that Carol would pass away. But in the end, Crystal was the one to go.

Once in the hospital, after many tests, I was put on the inevitable 40 gram protein diet since we were told that the kidneys could not handle heavy protein and the waste by-products associated with it. The amount of milk and meat consumption was reduced.

Because my kidneys were not functioning properly, they were excreting too much salt and so I was put on sodium bicarbonate pills and told to drink a lot of fluid to keep the kidneys flushed. This was my introduction to hospital life. It was the first of many, many sessions. During the summer, my ankles didn't swell up anymore, but a stiffness began to creep into my joints and my bones began to ache for periods at a time.

In the fall of 1969 I entered high school. I remember that in the first week of school the grade ten students would be rushing here and there to escape the frosh procedures of the grade twelve students. Exiting down a stairwell was a favorite escape. I joined the others, but I soon found that I couldn't run down the steps anymore and had to put a great deal of weight on the banister in order to go down the steps at any speed.

We went to a renal doctor to find out just what the trouble was. After having several x-rays my bone problem was diagnosed as renal rickets—the same bone pain that Crystal had suffered earlier. The doctor suggested massive doses of vitamin D in the hope that my kidneys would utilize some of the vitamins to restore calcium to my bones.

During this time, my brother Arthur was an active first year university student. He was a skilled pianist at an early age and had already taught piano at a certified music school. He was taking the Bachelor of Education degree program with a major in music.

It was in December of that year that the severe Hong Kong flu hit our city. Dad had it first and was very ill with it. Then Arthur got it. I remember he was in his bed all the time sleeping. Mom would bring him his meals, and when she saw that he was just eating mechanically she sensed that he was

not totally conscious and feared that the flu had brought on severe kidney failure. Her fear was confirmed. Arthur's kidneys shut down, and he went into a coma. In order to save his life, he had to go on the artificial kidney machine. Tubes were put into his artery and vein surgically, and he went on the machine to have his blood cleansed in two twelve-hour sessions. And so began his life by means of an artificial support system.

By January of 1970, my bones had begun to deteriorate more rapidly. They ached continually and movement became painful. I remember that in a typing class, an elective I was taking, we had to type long exercises on manual typewriters. The electric typewriters came in a more advanced course. After several minutes of banging, my fingers hurt to pound the keys and my wrists began to ache. I started to have to put the weight of my body on my hands to get out of a chair. I also began to need blood transfusions because my bone marrow was not producing red cells in the way that it should.

The first time that I needed a blood transfusion, I was hospitalized for three days. Later, as they increased in frequency, I was sent to the dialysis unit. I remember that during my first trip to the unit for blood, I looked in a room with many beds in it. Dialysis treatment was very archaic at that time. Lying on the beds were very ill-looking people with yellow complexions. All around were transfusions, kidney basins, oxygen tanks, and saline bottles. I saw a man whose color was awful. His bones were so deformed. His chest stuck out like a barrel. Every bone seemed distorted. I could see the pain. I went into the side room to await the intravenous needle for my transfusion. I cried. I cried for him and for those people hooked to that machine who looked so ill, but who were trying so hard to live.

That summer, as the pain in my bones continued to increase because the calcium was leaving them, they became soft. My legs could no longer support my frame and I watched my ankles bend under the weight and slowly spread further and further apart. My knee joints also became bent.

By September my legs were bent quite badly. My feet were far apart when I stood with my knees together. Being in high school, I became very self-conscious and wore Carol's pants because they were much wider than my own. It took sheer determination and will-power to go to school that month. By the time I came home from school every evening, I was in tremendous pain and I could only manage baby steps.

My art class was on the first floor of the school. I left the class five minutes early in order to get to my literature class which was on the next floor. It was painful to get to a standing position. Every step hurt and I slowly took the stairs one at a time.

Even with starting out early, the door was closed to my next class before I got there. I remember opening the door while the whole class watched. I slowly made my way to my chair. I heard a boy say, "Look at the way she walks!" and laugh.

Towards the end of the day, every step was effort. The halls would be swarming at class break. I'll never forget how some boys behind me swore because with the swell of students they couldn't pass me and had to be content to go at a snail's pace.

When I came home I had a bath in very hot water which helped to ease the pain. But at night my bones felt as if little insects were burrowing into them. At the end of September I told Mom that I couldn't live with the pain any longer; and if something weren't done, my life would soon be over.

All during this time, I went consistently to the hospital to have bloodwork taken as my blood chemistry—especially my sodium and potassium levels were regulated through the use of huge salt pills, sodium bicarbonate, and occasionally potassium liquid. Eight to ten tubes of blood were taken for the purpose of blood chemistry regulation. But I found out years later from a resident that many tubes were saved over the years to study the progress of my disease. The loss of blood caused my hemoglobin to fall and increased the frequency of blood transfusions.

Mom contacted the doctor and asked if anything could be done for my fast-deteriorating condition. My x-rays showed that my bones had gotten very thin and fragile. He told her that a certain doctor had come up with a new theory. Since the kidneys were not functioning properly, the parathyroid glands had taken over and were secreting a hormone which was forcing the calcium to leave the bones, thus causing rickets. He felt that if the parathyroid glands were removed and calcium was administered intravenously, the bones would then be able to accept the calcium if there was enough kidney function for vitamin D to be metabolized by the kidney. This was because the kidney metabolizes vitamin D into another form. This metabolized form causes the bones to accept the calcium.

This total parathyroidectomy, as it was called, had never been done on a kidney patient in the University Hospital. Then there was the question of whether or not my kidneys were strong enough to take anesthetic and the surgery without shutting down.

Mom asked the doctor, "Would you let your daughter have this surgery?" He replied in the affirmative. When Mom approached me about the surgery, I said that it had to be done. I couldn't carry on as I was.

I was hospitalized in the children's ward in October. I was fifteen.

I was taken for an intravenous pyelogram—a test where a colored fluid was injected and then scans of the kidney were taken by x-ray. This test revealed that I had millitary cystic kidneys. There were hundreds of little cysts in my kidneys.

The doctor took me down to a doctor's meeting where the pros and cons of my surgery were discussed, since this surgery would be a first in the hospital. Together we slowly made our way down the elevator and inched toward the doctors' room. I sat outside while I was being discussed.

I was called in and after answering questions I was asked to walk up the aisle to demonstrate just how bent my legs had become. Then I was allowed to leave. It was decided that I should go through with the surgery.

Somehow, as I sat in my hospital bed I felt that I wasn't going to live through this surgery. I really struggled with this. I read my Bible and prayed, and told God that I felt I was going to die, but that I didn't want to die yet. In the quiet hours of the evening, I struggled and wrestled with this in prayer.

Soon afterward I had a dream which made me feel that I wasn't going to die. There was a peaceful tranquil mauve sort of haze in my dream. I saw Jesus on the cross and behind Him there was a boy and two girls. I knew that they were Eddie, Grace, and Crystal.

When I woke up I remembered the dream. I felt it meant that since I wasn't there, my time had not come. However, I came very, very close to death shortly after the surgery.

The attending surgeon came to discuss the surgery with me. He told me that a slit would be made at the base of my neck and the four glands would be removed. He asked me if there were any questions. I asked if I could keep the glands. The answer was no.

I still remember waking up in the recovery room. A nurse asked how I felt. I squeaked out in a hoarse whisper, "My throat hurts."

For ten consecutive days and nights I was given bottle after bottle of intravenous calcium. My bones soaked it up.

It had turned out that in the operating room, three of my parathyroid glands were found. But the fourth one could not be found. Finally part of my thymus gland was also removed and the fourth parathyroid gland was found embedded in it. All of my glands were very enlarged.

The danger after the surgery was that of tetany—if the serum calcium in the blood dropped too low, with no glands, there was no bodily regulatory system to elevate the calcium if it went too low. After this ten day period my blood was constantly checked, because I would get tingling in my fingers, a sign of tetany or convulsions when the calcium drops too low.

When I was up and around again, I phoned Mom and told her that I would be having a bath. She worried about this because she felt that if I were alone and in water, and my calcium dropped, there could be serious consequences. She phoned the doctor, and he said there was nothing to worry about.

After my bath I felt strange. I went to the desk and told the nurse; but I couldn't lay a finger on just what was wrong. She told me to lie down on my bed for awhile. Although the next 17½ hours of my life will always remain blank, I went into convulsions right at the main desk, and the battle for my life began. This was at 10:00 in the morning. I remember waking up once and seeing my renal specialist with several doctors and nurses all around. I asked him to phone my mother.

He didn't phone her until 1:00 and then he said that she had better come. I remained unconscious, and in the evening, Arthur, Carol, and Dad came up. There was uncertainty as to whether or not I would be alive in the morning.

The patient beside me, a younger girl whom I had come to know, was moved out and Mom was given the bed to sleep on so that she could be near me through the night. A special nurse was assigned to me for the night shift.

At 3:30 in the morning, I awoke and tried to speak, but my tongue wouldn't cooperate and all that came out was garbled mumbo jumbo.

The night nurse who kept vigil hugged Mom for joy. She was so glad that I had made it. By the morning I was again speaking but every muscle

in my body felt as if it had been stretched out of shape. I was hooked to intravenous calcium after that, and when it was disconnected a syringe and calcium were kept close at hand so that a shot of calcium could be injected into my bloodstream if my serum calcium dropped too low once again.

Not long after, I was talking to the patient in the bed next to me when my tongue got thick again. But an intravenous injection cleared it up before anything serious had developed.

I got talking to a resident one day. He told me that since my bones were accepting calcium, they would begin to harden. However, since they were bent, they would harden in a bent form, and then it would be too late to straighten my limbs. He felt that I should get braces or casts put on my legs so that they would heal in a straight position. I thought a lot about this. It made sense to me.

Shortly after, I made my way down the corridor to the doctor's office. He happened to be in. I remember sitting down in the chair offered to me. The doctor said, "It must be pretty important to come all this way," since he knew of the pain that I had to walk. I explained my problem and asked for casts to be put on my legs.

The doctor told me that there were drawbacks. It took months for the calcium to leave my bones and for my bones to become soft and bend. He said that if casts were put on first of all, the bones would have to be reset and then that they would only bend again if taken out of the cast. However, there was a glimmer of hope. Although I was fifteen, my body, because of the kidney disease, had not developed as fast as it should have developed. My bones were, therefore, still growing. If the calcium went back into my bones and my bones began to harden, my bones, on their own, would heal and begin to straighten.

We looked at my legs. The knees were quite enlarged and from there to my ankles looked like an upside down V with my feet turned outwards at the ends. I remember saying, "It will just take time then?" He nodded and said, "Time and patience."

That year I missed a lot of school. The calcium levels in my bloodstream would suddenly drop, and sometimes in the middle of the night I had to go to the emergency ward for intravenous calcium. In the winter months Dad would warm up the car and take Mom and me to the hospital.

Although my legs didn't straighten quickly, they accepted calcium very fast. When you lose something like your mobility, you don't take walking for

granted very easily again. It was such a relief to open a car door without pain, or to roll down a car window or—blessed relief—to lie down without aching.

My x-rays showed continued acceptance of calcium and strengthening of my bones. I could finally climb stairs without pain and walk normally again. I continued to have hospital sessions in grade twelve to regulate the chemical balance in my blood; but with mobility restored, they were easier to endure.

In late December or early January of grade twelve, I developed a severe headache. The doctor said to bring me to the hospital but could find nothing severely out of balance. However, he said that I should stay in the hospital for a few days for observation. That few days lasted one month. During this time a resident doctor was allowed to look after me. He took many blood tests but not much more.

I was taking salt tablets at the time because my kidneys could not retain salt. With the salt tablets I was on, the sodium level in my bloodstream was maintained.

The resident decided to take me off the salt pills. Since an order was an order at the hospital, my salt tablets were discontinued accordingly. Of course, my muscles cramped and I began to get very dizzy, to be sick to my stomach, and to get very weak because the sodium level in my blood dropped to dangerously low levels. The salt pills were restored.

At that time, I began to get pain in my ankles so x-rays were taken. I still remember the doctor coming to my room and asking me if I had ever thought about dialysis.

I replied that it had crossed my mind but that was years away. The doctor told me that the x-rays were showing signs of bone deterioration again, and it looked as if the artificial kidney machine would be a reality sooner than I thought.

After he left, I remember lying with my head at the foot of the bed and my feet resting at the top of the headboard. I thought for a time and then I said to my roommate who had multiple sclerosis, "If I get bone disease again. . . I think I'll give up."

She said, "No, you won't. You'll carry on." In all sincerity I said, "No, I really don't think so." How glad I am that in January of grade twelve, I could not see into the future.

When I wrote my first departmental exams, the blood urea poisoning was very high. Normal BUN in the blood is 8-20; mine was 160. I would

forget things easily. I was needing more and more salt pills but because of all the salt, my blood pressure started to rise to the point where tiny vessels would burst. Consequently, I would get severe nose bleeds and blood transfusions were becoming more frequent. Once I convulsed at home.

In February, I was readmitted. I no longer felt like eating, and I was becoming more and more ill. My sister Carol was also in hospital and was preparing to go on dialysis because her kidney function was also stopping.

I remember that the doctor came to my room and told me that the time had come for me to go on hemodialysis. He said that first of all I would have a 48-hour-treatment of peritoneal dialysis. A tube would be inserted into my stomach and fluid circulated through. This fluid, after a period, would then be drained and the process would be repeated. Finally, I would be taken to surgery for a cannula and then, hemodialysis would begin.

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