



Pieces of My Heart: Love, Loss, and the Lessons They Left Behind

On June 14, 2024, my youngest son lost his father, who was also my ex-husband. I had the humbling honor of planning his homegoing celebration. Although we had been divorced for years, Derrick and I shared a bond like no other, a connection for which I will always be grateful.

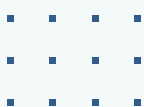
Many were puzzled to see me grieve so deeply for an ex-husband. To that, I say this: *It is my sincere prayer that one day you experience a love so profound that it leaves an indelible mark on your soul.*

I don't share this to paint a picture of perfection—far from it. Our marriage had its challenges, as evidenced by our divorce. My intent is not to romanticize but to illuminate how losses such as these have shaped me. Traumatic experiences, as painful as they are, often serve as the catalyst for transformation.

I have walked the path of loving deeply and losing twice, which most would consider unbearable. Yet, I stand here today as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit, having buried not just one but two pieces of my heart.

On April 10, 2019, after being married for just eight months, I lost my late husband Greg in a tragic accident. His sudden departure left me navigating a terrain of grief that I wouldn't wish on anyone. And yet, the truth is, loss is a journey we will all travel at some point in life.

These profound losses have shown me that love is a powerful force—one that transcends time, distance, and even death. Each relationship, though unique, was filled with moments that shaped me, strengthened me, and taught me invaluable lessons about life, love, and resilience.





Derrick brought companionship, dreams, and a love that shaped me in profound ways. His passing reminded me that even imperfect love can leave an everlasting imprint on our souls.

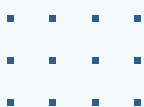
Greg, my late husband, was my rock, my confidant, and my greatest supporter. His love was a healing balm to the wounds of my past. Together, we created memories that will forever be etched in my heart. When he was suddenly taken, the void he left behind felt insurmountable. And yet, his love continues to guide me every single day. Losing both Derrick and Greg—two men who held pieces of my heart—was more than I ever thought I could bear. Yet, here I stand, proof that the human spirit is capable of enduring and even thriving after profound loss.

These experiences have taught me that love's true power lies not in its permanence but in its ability to transform us. Love, once given, never truly leaves. Instead, it deepens our capacity for compassion, empathy, and gratitude.

For a long time, I felt ashamed of having been married more than once. Religion and societal expectations often impose feelings of guilt and inadequacy. But healing has shown me a greater truth: **Our journeys—messy, imperfect, and painful—are what make us who we are.**

Grief has shaped me, but it has not broken me. Instead, it has taught me to live with purpose and gratitude. I honor the memories of both Derrick and Greg by choosing joy, kindness, and authenticity. Their love remains my guiding light, helping me navigate even the darkest days.

To anyone navigating love and loss, know this: *You are not alone.* Your story matters. Live fully, knowing that even in loss, there is beauty, purpose, and hope.





With love and light,
Shauntia Hart
(formerly Wright-Stanback)

