When No Words Seem Appropriate

I won’t say, "I know how you feel"—because I don’t. I’ve lost parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends, but I’ve never lost a child. So how can I say I know how you feel?

I won’t say, "You’ll get over it"—because you won’t. Life will have to go on. The washing, cooking, cleaning, the common routine. These chores will take your mind off your loved one, but the hurt will still be there.

I won’t say, "Your other children will be a comfort to you"—because they may not be. Many mothers I’ve talked to say that after they have lost a child, they easily lose their temper with their remaining children. Some even feel resentful that they’re alive and healthy when the other child is not.

I won’t say, "Never mind, you’re young enough to have another baby"—because that won’t help. A new baby cannot replace the one that you’ve lost. A new baby will fill your hours, keep you busy, give you sleepless nights. But it will not replace the one you’ve lost.

You may hear all these platitudes from your friends and relatives. They think they are helping. They don’t know what else to say. You will find out who your true friends are at this time. Many will avoid you because they can’t face you. Others will talk about the weather, the holidays and the school concert but never about how you’re coping.