

# THE PRICE OF DWI

DIANE FUSCO



*Written By  
Diane M. Fusco  
6333 Van Landt Road  
Livonia, New York 14487  
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*A*

*Special*

*Thank*

*You*

*To*

*Marc*

*Mehlenbacher*

*Portrait of Paul by  
George West*

*Illustrations by  
Jodi Jackson*

*Unicorns by  
Edward G. Lochner*

*Printed by CopyMax*

*We would like to thank our family and  
friends for their love, help and support.*

*This book was written  
in memory of our beloved Paul  
who will always live in our hearts.*

*Please don't drink and drive  
because someone loves you very much.*

## *The Price of DWI*

*On December 2, 1988 I put my scanner on and went to bed. I was an EMT on the Geneseo ambulance squad. Little did I know when I woke up my only child would be dying in a car accident. I heard about the accident on the scanner and went to the scene of the accident.*

*The irony of it all was I wouldn't have been an EMT if it wasn't for him.*

*In the middle of the course the practical part became very difficult for me and I was ready to quit. My son Paul started practicing with me. He would be the victim and I would save him. When I received my EMT certificate he said, "I knew you could do it, Mom."*

*God help me! When it really counted I couldn't save him. He was drinking, driving and speeding. He flipped his car over and was killed instantly.*

*He saw his ex-girlfriend with another guy and decided to get drunk. When I found out he was dead, I just laid down in the road in shock.*

*At that moment, I knew my life was destroyed. My son was only 22 years old and his life was over. I had told him countless times if he ever had too much to drink to call me. He had walked by a pay phone to get to his car.*

*Paul's father and I had to choose a casket and plan a funeral service. Because Paul was in a very bad car accident, we had to decide if it would be an open or closed casket. I looked at my beloved son for the last time. Oh God, how could this destroyed body be my child. We decided to close it and remember him the way he was. I kissed him goodbye forever and walked away sobbing. My niece gave me the most beautiful picture of him. I found out later that she had gone to Motophoto and asked them to stay late so we could have the picture for his casket. I needed to be close to him so I laid my head on his casket next to his picture. We buried him two miles from our house, he would never come home again. After Paul's death, I just didn't know how I was going to survive. My husband is a farmer so it was Paul who went to all the family gatherings with me.*

*My sister took me to a Compassionate Friends meeting in Batavia, New York*

*(Compassionate Friends is a support group for parents who have lost a child ) To be honest, I thought, how can these strangers help me.*

*Everyone sat in a circle and one by one told their story. I found myself sobbing with other parents who knew the horrible price of DWI.*

*We are sentenced to spend the rest of our life without our beloved child. It was at a meeting that I met Evelyn Dillon, a victim advocate from the Genesee County Sheriff's Department.*

*Her husband was murdered and now she helps other victims. She invited my sister and I to church services, dinners and meetings of the Victims Impact Panel. I listened to the panel, but I wasn't strong enough to help other people. I wasn't even strong enough to help myself. So, I took all the help those strangers could give me with the promise to myself to someday be a stranger for someone else.*

*In 1992 I tried to start a bereavement support group for parents in Livingston County. I really didn't know how to do it and gave up. I guess I wasn't emotionally strong enough yet. It has been eleven years, and I now feel strong enough to keep my promise.*

*It really has been difficult writing this letter  
because I had to face the memories  
of the time when I almost didn't make it.*

*Paul raced at Perry Speedway every  
Saturday night for the season. I was his biggest fan  
and after his race he would come sit with me  
until the races were over. At the Perry Speedway  
Banquet, Paul won the Rookie of the Year  
award for 1988. He was so excited when he showed  
it to me. I grabbed it and told him I was going to  
keep it. He chased me and got it back. We both  
laughed so hard. I was so proud of him.*

*One week later, I sit here holding his award.  
It is mine now, my beloved Paul was killed  
last night. The laughter now is replaced  
with tears. A few weeks later we had to choose a  
headstone for his grave. I decided to design it  
myself. I took his award and a picture of his  
race car and had them both engraved  
on the back of his headstone.*

*His award will forever be  
his. I wrote a poem in his memory and had it  
engraved on the front with his picture.*

*I started writing poetry in his memory.  
It became an outlet for the incredible pain of losing him.*

*Each poem was written at a different stage of my grief. The poem "Gone with the wind" was written at a very difficult time. It had been five years and everyone in my life acted like he never existed.*

*Can you imagine having your child with you for 22 years, then suddenly you never see him or have him mentioned again. My heart was so broken.*

*I entered the National Library of Poetry contest, and they have published seven of my poems in his memory. Poems published in the National Library of Poetry books are from all over the United States.*

*I have donated fifteen books to local libraries in his memory. How sad! He will always be remembered because his mother will forever be grieving his senseless death.*

*I love children, but I was only able to have one child. Paul was my life and my future. His children were to be my children. I remember my first Christmas with my baby, but I also remember my first Christmas at his grave.*

*I decorated it with silk Christmas flowers. My family got him an eternal candle. My Holidays now are the changing of his grave. The only difference is the color of the silk flowers.*

*At Christmas, I watch my nieces and nephews, and their children open up their gifts. I sit there silently watching knowing that just one phone call could have made it all so different. As I leave, my mother gives me Paul's gift, his father puts the candles for his eternal light in the car.*

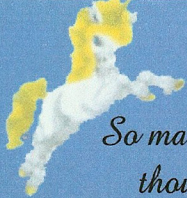
*I want you to understand I am not writing this letter for pity. I do not want it and I do not need it.*

*I am writing this letter for your Mother.*

*I know this letter isn't going to change my life and I accept that, but I am hoping it will change your Mother's life and you will make that phone call.*

*So you got a DWI, you got a second chance.*

*Sincerely,  
Diane Fusco*



## *The End of Time*

*So many people die, each and everyday I never  
thought you'd be one, I can honestly say.*

*I loved you so much, it just isn't fair your death,*

*Paulie is something I cannot bear. There's  
been so many bad times, we've always stuck together  
but losing you so soon is a pain that will last forever.*

*I hope you can see me from where you are above,  
and think of all the memories that are so full of love.*

*Maybe someday I can think of you and smile,  
instead of cry. But I wish someone could tell me,  
why it was you who had to die. You are in my  
thoughts all day through I hope somehow you know  
how much I miss you. It's just hard to believe that you've  
died when you were the one who was always so alive.*

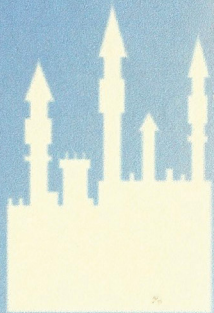
*I will never forget you, the special cousin of mine.*

*I will always remember your smile  
until the end of time....*

*In memory of my cousin  
Paul L Fusco who may not  
always be spoken of but is always  
remembered and loved.*

*Written by Jeni McArthur*

*As published by the  
National Library of Poetry in 1995*



## Forever Twenty-Two

Two years ago, time stood still leaving you forever twenty-two, for reasons we will never know. The joy we felt on the day you were born we will never know again. The pain we felt on the day you died we will always hold within.

We remember with happiness, the first time you laughed, the first time you walked and the first time you talked.

We remember with sadness, the last time we laughed with you, the last time we walked with you and the last time we talked with you.

The day you were born, we took it for granted, you would be with us until the end of our days.

Twenty-five years later, we place a flower upon your grave and walk away lost in memories of yesterday.

Happy Birthday baby,  
you would have been twenty-five years old today

In loving memory of my son Paul L Fusco

Written by Diane Fusco

As published by the National Library of Poetry in 1994



# Gone With The Wind

*It has been five years since I have been gone.*

*The memory of me has just gone with the wind.*

*My face has faded from your mind, and my name you never speak.*

*It is like I never lived you see. I have just gone with the wind.*

*I wait for you my friend to come and visit me.*

*To put one small flower on my grave, to say you cared for me.*

*From where I am I see it all and remember all we shared.*

*But in the end it is all just gone with the wind.*

*I did not ask for you to grieve for me until the end of time.*

*I only wanted for you to remember some of the good times.*

*They have just gone with the wind.*

*If you loved me, you would have remembered me.*

*I would have remembered you, but yesterday is  
forever just gone with the wind.*

*It is all right, my friend, you see I understand,*

*because I know someday you too will*

*just be gone with the wind.*

*As published by the  
National Library of Poetry 1995*





# Because of You

In Loving Memory of my Son  
Paul Fusco



*Because of you, we learned the true meaning of love.*

*For the bond between a parent and a child is forever.*

*Because of you, your father learned that hunting is not the same  
- without you at his side - only emptiness remains.*

*Because of you, we walk a path we never would have chosen.*

*It has been five years since we have seen your  
smile or heard your laughter. Because of you,  
we have met many special people who walk our path.*

*You taught us the true meaning of compassion and understanding.  
We thank you for touching our lives. If we had a choice to avoid  
the pain and to never have known you, we would choose the pain.*

*You gave us love, laughter and many special memories;  
and we miss you more than words can say.*

*We take comfort in knowing that  
God is taking care of you for us until we meet again.*

Written by  
Diane Fusco



*As published by the National  
Library of Poetry in 1996*

# Free At Last



*In loving memory of my son Paul Fusco*

*I find it so hard to face another day, because  
I know you are gone forever. The sun is shining, but  
there is only rain in my heart.*

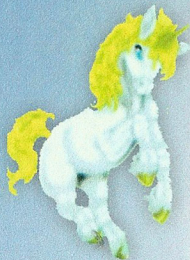
*The birds are singing, but I will never hear your voice again.  
I will never dream again, because you were my dream.  
I will never walk in peace again, because I will be  
forever running from the pain.*



*My house is so quiet, I will never hear  
the laughter of my grandchildren.*

*I am your survivor until the day God calls me home.  
For then I will finally be free to dance in the  
heavens with my children.*

*Written by Diane Fusco*

*As published by the  
National Library of  
Poetry in 1998*





*Anonymous Angel*

*God sent me an angel,  
that angel was you.*

*You took away my tears  
and made me laugh with you.*

*You took away the silence  
and gave me back my music.*

*You gave me back the good memories  
of the young man I love so much.*

*You took me out of the darkness,*

*You showed me the light,  
now I know he is all right.*



*As published by the  
National Library of Poetry  
in 2001*

# *In The Shadow of your Grave*

*It has been ten years since you have been gone. As I stand here in the shadow of your grave. I wonder how I have survived your death.*

*Now I know there is something I have to do. Before I spend eternity with you*

*I feel such peace, because now I see the path God has chosen for me. I will follow it because I know it will lead me to you.*

*The plan is so clear as I reach up and turn on the light, and finally let go of the darkness.*

*I will Always remember you precious child of mine. Memories of you will forever be engraved in my heart.*

*As I walk away from your grave, I know I am leaving part of my heart with you. The part that died the day you did.*

*As published by the National Library of Poetry in 2000*



## Books Donated in Memory of Paul

The Coming of Dawn "Remember Me"

Livonia Public Library

Perry Public Library

Wadsworth Library (Geneseo)

The Space Between "Forever Twenty-Two"

Dansville Public Library

Mt Morris Library

Best Poems of 1995 "Gone with the Wind"

Avon Free Library

Lima Public Library

Best Poems of the '90's "Because of You"

Warsaw Public Library

Wayland Free Library Gunlocke Memorial

Best Poems of 1998 "Free at Last"

Honeoye Public Library

Castile Library

America At The Millennium "In the Shadow of your Grave"

Bell Memorial Library (Nunda)

Caledonia Library

A Moment In Time "The End of Time"

Attica Library

The Best Poems & Poets of 2001 "Anonymous Angel"

Livonia Public Library





*Christmas*  
1966



*Christmas*  
1989



## Remember Me



*This was written by his Mother from Pauls heart*

*Remember me not with sadness, but with the  
happiness I gave others. Remember me not  
with tears, but hear my gentle laughter.*

*Remember me not with bitterness for the  
short time that we had, but with all the special  
times we shared that will forever last.*

*Turn this book and see my eyes look totally  
in disbelief, for I have seen God.*

*The total happiness and peace I feel,  
you too will someday know.*

*Until that day, remember me, for I shall  
never walk this way again.*

*As published by the National Library  
of Poetry 1993*



