

## Shannon's Words at Trevor's Memorial

One morning in my 17<sup>th</sup> year of life I stood in our family kitchen, jammie-clad, holding the cabinet door open as I contemplated which cereal to eat for breakfast. My mom and dad said they had an announcement to make to my sisters and me. I don't know why I was so shocked to hear they were expecting another baby, but obviously it surprised and excited me enough that the memory is permanently etched in my brain. I remember we all cheered!

Months later, as I made my summer plans, I felt safe choosing a trip that would leave 4 days before my mom's due date, since Ali and Brit had both been born weeks before their own due dates. But, it was with a heavy heart that I boarded the plane at noon on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1988. 10 hours and 34 minutes later, Trevor was born – at least my parents were able to reach me with the good news before I left the country.

So, I didn't get to meet my baby brother until he was a couple months old, but he was still one of the youngest and cutest babies I had ever held at that point and I fell in love with him instantly. Of course I was busy with the typical activities of an egotistical high school senior during Trevor's first year of life, so I can't share any specific memories of his infant antics with you, but, perhaps my not living with him for most of his life caused the memories I do have of him to be quite vivid. I have too many to recount to you now, of course but I chose a few that I thought were particularly special.

While listing out my Trevor memories, I came to a funny realization – namely that many of my memories of Trevor include riding in a vehicle together somewhere. Too many times to count, I arrived home from college for a visit and the entire ride home Trevor would tell me stories. When he was young, most were prefaced with the phrase, “When I was three . . .” Honestly, my sisters and I agree that had all of Trevor's memories of being three actually taken place during that year of his life, it would have surely lasted at least four or five years!

Once, probably when Trevor was about 8 or 9, after a long journey, we arrived home, groggy and grumpy. Dad started diligently unloading the suitcases from the car while the rest of us struggled to get ourselves into the house. Mom discovered that Trevor's seatbelt couldn't be unfastened which horrified him and he started to scream. One of my sisters, probably Ali, had the genius idea to push his limbs around to try to squeeze him out of the seatbelt. Of course this served to get him even more tangled and panicked. In an early flair for drama, Trevor started making choking noises while Mom ran around yelling, “Darnell, what should we do?” and the girls and I giggled uncontrollably. Mom came to her senses and procured some scissors which she was about to use surgically on the seatbelt when finally Dad came to the rescue. He magically unbuttoned the seatbelt while scolding us for even entertaining the thought of using SCISSORS on his vehicle! Of course Trevor was fine and he beat up on my sisters and me for our insensitivity while also laughing with us.

None of us can forget Trevor's passion for listening to Adventures in Odyssey whenever we would travel somewhere . . . I also remember the arguments he and Ali had over listening to them – her hatred for them probably made him love them all the more. He continued his passion for this radio series even into his adulthood and this time the argument was with me and my boys over who would get the newest CD set first!

Of course there was the time I chauffeured him and a friend to soccer, I mean, torture camp, while my parents were out of town. Trevor decided early on that soccer, at least at the Air Force Academy, was not his calling, but due to our commitment to the carpool with the friend and Trevor's humorous, enduring attitude, I made him see out the session and we survived it together – every ride home he would tell tales of the endless soccer drills. By the way, this also is a trait many of us came to know and love about Trevor. His flair for telling detailed stories fascinated us – to retell the plot of a ½ an hour sitcom could take 45 minutes or more!

As Trevor grew up and I started a family of my own, our interactions, of course, changed some. My memories became mixed with those of my husband and sons'. Speaking of my sons, Trevor was always so excited when each of our boys was born and I have photos of him visiting me and my newborn boys in the hospital from every single time one entered the world. A couple of years ago, Trevor was thrilled when he landed the part of a character named George in his school's production of Schoolhouse Rock. My eldest son, George, went to see the play and came home beaming with pride that Uncle Trevor had portrayed such a great character and, to this day, loved listening to the Schoolhouse Rock CD because of that play.

My relationship with Trevor ebbed and flowed throughout his life, depending on where we each lived and how busy our lives were. Early on in the fall of 2007, during Trevor's first trimester at Northwestern, he emailed me and expressed a desire to rekindle a close relationship. This started a fun three months of email correspondence when we would pass one-liners from our mutual favorite sit-com, The Office, back and forth to one another, discuss his school classes and the antics of my boys. Looking back, I can see how his emails grew increasingly energetic and ambitious – “I have a great idea for what the whole family can do together at Thanksgiving!” “I'm writing a play, wanna read it?!” It was soon after this that Trevor was diagnosed as bipolar and then a couple months later when he first attempted to take his own life.

My dad stated that he believes God saved Trevor after his first suicide attempt, in part, to help our family to have fewer regrets now that he is gone. I believe he speaks a lot of truth with that statement. After Trevor got out of the hospital and returned home this past Spring, I made many attempts to let him know our love for him and invite him to join my family and me for various activities – from camping to birthdays to simple hand-out times at our house. Again one of the deepest conversations I've ever had with Trevor took place while driving from Denver back to Monument in May. We discussed his recent stint at a treatment center in Arizona, his being diagnosed bipolar, how God fit into the picture. I was impressed that, despite the fear and confusion Trevor expressed, his character of tenderness still shined through.

I saw Trevor sporadically through out this past summer and each time was fun – especially for my boys. When we would visit the house in Monument and my boys ran downstairs to wake him in the morning by jumping on his bed and wrestling, he allowed them to clobber him and he rose quickly to get in good swimming and playing time with them. The last day we visited was September 5<sup>th</sup>. Trevor was excited to be packing up to head back to school and he seemed extra animated and interested in talking with me. Since the weather was cooler, we weren't able to swim that day so my boys played with grandma most of the morning while Trevor and I enjoyed talking about the details of both of our lives. I remember thinking how wonderful of a time it had been with him – how fitting of a final visit before his return to Northwestern. Of course, little did I know it would be our last visit together on this earth.

While I know that Trevor was a genius academically, a theater star, devoted friend and the life of a party, as many of you have attested to, the Trevor I knew best was the typical baby brother who just loved his family. From spitting watermelon seeds on the Fourth of July to reluctantly ushering at my wedding, in many ways there was nothing very extraordinary that Trevor DID in or for my life. But, the fact that he WAS here, in my presence and a part of my family, caring for us in his sweet way, made his life incredibly valuable to me. ***If I can emphasize anything to all of you here today it would be that every life is an incredible gift from God – to be valued and treasured and never taken for granted.***

That final day I spent with Trevor, ended with me going to fetch my 2 ½ year old, Teddy, out of the bedroom he had been napping in. Trevor had also been napping in that room that afternoon and I woke him when I opened the door. True to Trevor-form, before I hugged him good-bye, he had to tell me the story of listening to Teddy settle in for his nap. Trevor acted it out as he spoke – “Teddy picked up the lamb and started talking to it, baa-baa, and then it was like Teddy was making the lamb talked back to himself – baa, baa, baa, baa, on and on. It was so cute. He only talked with the lamb for about 30 seconds until he fell asleep snuggling it.” Trevor paused then and smiled, saying, “I just really enjoyed listening to him!” That was my brother. And we all miss him so much.