**I then passed into the place of light: rolling hills, grass, flowers, blue skies and  vibrant with color. What amazed me was the intensity, brilliance, and clarity of the color and that it seemed to be emitted from within each aspect of the landscape. The grass glowed green. It was so beautiful. It was so very beautiful.**

**Suddenly I was in the presence of a Being of Light. I could not see the face, could communicate, but not in words or pictures even; in some connection of oneness. I experience that connection in meditation frequently, but I cannot explain it very precisely. It is beyond words and other kinds of experiences. The emotions are always enhanced. I feel joy so deep that my whole self leaps with gratitude; I feel peace; I feel awe and belonging. I did not have a specific life review, but felt everything about me and my life was known, understood and not judged. I was profoundly loved.**

**My first question was "Is this heaven?".**

**"It can be, if that's what you want. It can be Hell, as well, if that's what you believe. This reality is an extension of you, instantly realized and formed. You always create your own reality, no matter where you find yourself, for we are all co-creators."**

**"Where is God? I don't see him." I asked. They became visibly amused, like they were snickering at my question under their breath.**

**"How can you see that which you are yourself a part of? We are all expressions of God. When you see with your eyes, you see through the eyes of God and he experiences reality through yours. When you speak to God, you speak to yourself. We are one and the same, there is no division or separation. You can no more 'see' God than your hand can see you, for it is a part of you and functions because of you and for your purposes, as well as it's own. There is no separation. Any that seems to exist is an illusion. The light that surrounds us here is God. It is our source of being and is given freely to all."**

**Next question. "Why do I feel like this is home?".**

**"Because it is home. All begin here and return here. It is the starting point for all journeys and lessons."**

**A strange question. I still don't know why I asked it, but at the time it seemed relevent. "When I come back again, can I stay?". I got an even stranger answer.**

**"We don't think you'll want to stay long, you never do. You love your lessons, especially the hard ones. You can do as you please, it's your choice."**

**I was left with the feeling  of having unfinished business in life. The grief that I felt from my mother and friends was intense. In spite of my troubled life, I had many friends, some of which were close. I was well known if not popular, and I could sense many things said about my life and death. The sense of my mother’s grief was overwhelming.

There were other feelings as well, from school friends, in fact nearly the whole student body reacted to the news of my death. I could feel a great many thoughts, sorrow, grief and prayers. I could feel the thoughts of extended family members as well. Even people I didn’t even know were affected, community members, people who read the news or heard it on the radio. Somehow, I could feel all the repercussions of my death at once. Each thought as an individual feeling, but more significantly summed up as one overall feeling. Not so much a judgment of what my life meant, but more in the way I, and others, felt about my actions in life. The other did not judge these feelings either, we experienced them together.

I became aware of the thoughts of the other again. This other had experienced these feelings at the same time and in the same way I had just done. It was like we had just watched a movie together and we were discussing our feelings about the movie. Rather than a movie we would only see, this was a movie we could feel. I cannot say whether this was God, my spirit guide, Jesus or some relative of mine. My sense of it is that they are so similar that it is not an entirely relevant label to apply to this other. The other actually felt more like a very close friend at the time. I can say with certainty that this voice and I were together in some profound way then, and have been and forever shall be together. In that sense it does fit with some of the things I have read about God in the Bible. I have also read similar things about guardian angels, spirit guides and the higher self. During this exchange I was not concerned with labels.

I must try to explain that which cannot be put into words. This place was a part of me and I a part of it. We are not and were not separate, even as I write these words, years after the experience; we are still one this place and I. The experience of being there is to exist as love, inside love knowing only love. It was as if the emotion of love is what in the end and in the beginning I have always been. Love is what I have only been. And, to extrapolate that to human existence, we are all connected in this way, inside this place, which is all things, and all people, life is love and love is life. Every atom in the universe is connected in this way.

As I floated away from my body I was somehow aware of the air molecules, not in a scientific way, but such that there was a connection between the air molecules and what I had become, or rather, what I had always been. In this frame of mind I am always connected to all things. I have also said in conversations about my experience, and continue to assert, that what is really going is so much bigger than anything I had ever experienced in church or in literature through any medium. It transcends the human capacity for expression. In my awareness, I became or returned to being a part of this.

After summing up the feelings of a short lifetime, the thought exchange continued. The question was put in my mind, “Do you want to stay?” The voice seemed to actually ask many questions at once. In the question, I sensed a great many different meanings, “Are you done with this life? Do you want to finish the work you were to do in this life? Do you want your loved ones to experience this grief?” All of this was asked in an instant, a single thought. It is my recollection that the choice was mine, totally of my own free will, but I also have a sense that within the question the repercussions and results of either decision were also known. For each version of the question, the feelings and repercussions of my decision were felt. The feeling of grief my mother felt at the news of my death dominated my feelings. Somewhere beneath this overwhelming feeling of grief however, was a sense of duty and work to do.

While the dialog and images of this exchange seem to have been difficult in some ways, I must emphasize the context of overwhelming compassion and love in which the exchange took place. This was in fact the most peaceful and tranquil moment of my life. I cannot adequately express how natural and good this experience was. In this place, with this being, everything was more than OK. Acceptance and understanding of all my feelings was shared instantly with this being who loved me unconditionally.**

**The grass was so green it hurt to look at it, and it felt so good!  I could even taste the grass by feeling it, it tasted like watermelon.  Walking on the grass was wonderful – it was an incredible feeling.  The best way I can describe it was, “OH MY GOD! WOW!!!”  The sense of smell was not with the nose.  It was more like it permeated through my cheekbones under my eye, like smelling through the sinuses.**

**I didn’t have 360 degree vision like a lot of people.  I suppose this was because I was focused on the grass and other things that were closer and more immediate to my attention.  The rest of what might be there was unimportant.  The best way to describe where I fit into the scheme of things was like I was in the mudroom.  This is the area of the house that is not the house, but it is not outdoors either.  The mudroom is not hot like in the house, and it is not cold like outside. It is the middle, high-traffic area where guests get rid of shoes and get ready to transition into the house.**

**Then three yellow lights came forth.  They came from the left side of an unbelievably intensely colored green pine tree (color of maple leaf in summer time with light coming through it).  I got the feeling of yellow and the taste of lemonade.  Not yellow like a banana, but it was more the emotion and feeling of yellow.  Sort of like a flame dancing on top of a candle during an emotional dinner and also like the feeling of warm yellow sunshine.  I didn’t really see them, but I knew they were there.**

**My near-death experience occurred when I was five years old, in Russia where I was born and lived at the time, on a holiday trip to the Black Sea where I went with my mother and grandparents.**

**On this particular day we had all gone down to the beach. The sea was rough, and my mother was standing in the water holding me in her arms. I remember feeling safe and secure, although the waves were huge, enormous from my five-year old perspective, and being excited as they came crushing over my mother and me, one by one. Then this particularly big wave hit us, my mother lost her balance, lost her grip, and I was washed away by the wave.**

**For a moment I felt the utter fear of death, my body instinctively sensing this being a life-threatening situation. I held my breath and struggled to find something to hold on to, to save myself, but my hands were only grasping water. Only water was everywhere, I was helpless, completely out of control. When I realized there was no use to fight, nothing to get a grip on, I surrendered. I let go of my breathing, let go of trying to save myself, let go of the struggle for life, and allowed whatever was happening to me to happen.**

**Next thing I remember is feeling the most profound and utter sense of peace I ever felt in my life. Suddenly I was feeling completely safe, being enveloped and protected by something I can only describe as complete unconditional love. This love was all around me, it was everywhere, but at the same time it was also me, the one I was, my innermost essence. There was no longer any fear, no worries, no struggle for anything, and I could've gone on being wherever I was, and feeling the way I was forever.**

**I felt as though I was finally being my true self. There were no limits or limitations what so ever, I could go wherever I wanted, know whatever I wished, do anything. The sense of freedom was inexplicable. I was also strangely aware that the thing we ordinarily call 'time' now was suspended, and no longer existed.**

**Then I was swept away by some unknown force, and started to move at an enormous speed, which felt a lot faster than the speed of light. I traveled an enormous distance, literally traveled 'beyond the world'. I didn't have any sense of having a 'body', just of moving like a thunderbolt through a darkness toward a point of brilliant light in the distance, and as I came closer to this light my only desire was to get to it, to get to where this light was.**

**When I reached the point of light I found myself in a world of light. Everything in this place was made of, and radiated light. It was beautiful and radiant beyond expression. 'Heaven' would be an adequate description, but I had no religious feeling, and knew there was no such thing as a 'hell.' I knew, without knowing how and why I knew this, that this was the place where everyone eventually got when they died, regardless of who they were and what they had done during their lives.**

**In the midst of the light, stood a male figure. It was radiating this light, and radiating this totally unearthly complete unconditional Love. I was embraced by this being, or enveloped in its light, which felt like an embrace. Suddenly I remembered this place. This was my home, the place that was really my home, and I wondered how I could've ever forgotten about it. I felt as though after a long, difficult journey in a foreign country I finally had come home, and the being of light who was there before me was the being that knew me better than anyone else in creation.**

**The being of light knew everything about me. It knew all I had ever thought, said or done, and it showed me my whole life in a flash of an instant. I was shown all of the details in my life, the one I´d already lived, and all that was to come if I returned to earth. It was all there at the same time, all the details of all the cause and effect relations in my life, all that was good or negative, all of the effects my life on earth had had on others, and all of the effects the lives of others that had touched me had had on me. Every single thought and feeling was there, nothing was missing. And I could experience the feelings and thoughts of all the other people involved myself, almost become them, which gave me pure experiential understanding of what brought other people pain, or joy, the positive or negative experiences and effects of my own actions.**

**The being was not judging me in any way during the life review, even though I saw a lot of shortcomings in my life. It simply showed my life the way it had been to me, loved me unconditionally, which gave me the strength I needed to see it all the way it was without any blinders, and let me decide for myself what was positive, negative, and what I needed to do about that. I don't remember any details of the events that were shown to me, neither past nor future, but I remember what was most important.**

**The being of light showed me that all that was really important in life was the love we felt, the loving acts we preformed, the loving words we spoke, the loving thoughts we held. All that was made, said, done, or even thought without love was undone. It didn't matter. It simply did no longer exist. Love was all that was really important, only love was real. Everything we did lovingly was as is was supposed to be. It was okay. It was good.**

**And the love we'd felt during our lives was all that was left when everything else, everything perishable in life, had vanished.**

**Next I remember finding myself in some other place, not knowing how I'd gotten there. The first being of light was gone, and I was surrounded by other beings, or people, who I felt as though I 'recognized.' These beings were like family, old friends, who'd been with me for an eternity. I can best describe them as my spiritual, or soul family. Meeting these beings was like reuniting with the most important people in ones life, after a long separation. There was an explosion of love and joy on seeing each other again between us all.**

**The beings communicated with me, and one another in some kind of telepathical way. We spoke without words, directly, from mind to mind, or from spirit to spirit. None of us had any bodies. We were all made of some unknown substance, like a concentration of pure light, we were like dots of light in the light everywhere around us. Everybody knew what everybody else 'had in mind' instantly. There was no possibility, or need to hide anything from anybody. This kind of communication made misunderstandings impossible, and made us close in a way almost impossible to describe. We were all individuals, but at the same time we were all one, united by indestructible bonds of love forever, and also united with the light in the world of light around us, being part of it, and part of each others light.**

**The love these beings of light exuded healed me, swept away all the darkness in me, erased all of the pain and sorrow I'd accumulated during my life on earth. Earth and the life I'd lived on it felt very distant, was getting more distant all the time, almost like it had never really existed at all. I was in this place with my soul family for a period of time that felt like an eternity. No 'time' in the usual sense existed here. Neither did the concept of 'space', but even so there were different places to go, and spans of time that passed by. This is a contradiction in terms, but it is the only way I'm able to explain it in words. Spaceless space, timeless time. In this place there was only pure Being.**

**Except being 'healed' I don't remember what we did, just that we were together, and enjoyed it enormously. I remember this 'world' of light as being huge, an enormous place, a place without limits or borders, neither individual or external. I remember all beings who were in this place had complete, total knowledge, about all and everything. It was all pleasant, loving, beautiful beyond expression. Every 'thing' and 'being' in this place was made of light, and everything was light, even though there were individual 'things' and 'beings'. The light is what I remember best. It was living. Alive. A living light, that was everything and all, the essence of everything and all.**

**Next thing I remember is suddenly finding myself back in the presence of the being of light I'd met first, and told I had to go back. I said: no way, I won't do it. This was about the last thing I wanted to do. Life on earth, filled with darkness, pain, sorrow, limits and limitations, was like a horrifying prison compared to this wonderful place, and I simply refused to go back. I was told that it wasn't my time, that I'd been granted a visit 'back home', but that I had to fulfill my purpose and do the work I myself had chosen to do on earth. The being of light reminded me that my purpose was to learn more about love, compassion, and how to express them on earth, and that my work was to help other people in any way I could. I had chosen this myself. And it told me that I would be back in the world of light in no time. Never forget, in reality there is no time, only eternity itself, it said.**