



*For my brother
Ronald on his 40th
Love, Maria*

By Katharine McLennan
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Poem continues on the next pages →

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My brother Ronald turns 40 and so
I write a poem on November 18th so he'll know
What an amazing brother he is and will always be
How much he is loved and he means to me

1979 was the fortunate year
For arriving in San Diego, a boy! It was clear
For Lillian and Bob after two older girls
A third child, as healthy in all his curls

So now Marcia, and Andi, and our dog
In a city full of cable cars, hills and fog
A pink house if I recall and friends all around
A baby to play with, and drive with to Old Town

But many moves we would do with the first to Reno
A skiing mecca and a love of baby cappuccino
As Ronnie grew into a toddler, his sisters ski at Tahoe
Remembering you with your soldier toys and wheelbarrow

At 5 Ronnie became international as we headed to Rome
On 19 Via del Corso we lived in a house therein
The Pantheon, St. Peters, Roman Forum and Coliseum
Might have seemed quite a flurry, museum after museum

But at 7, we moved yet again to Amsterdam
Where we lived with bicycles and loved no traffic jam
And Rover! Entered our lives so cute and so blonde
Ronnie's first puppy of whom he would become so fond

And at 9, we return to our home in San Diego
And Ronnie could love to camp with our Winnebago
And he would be a Soft Ball lover joining the summer fun
With Curt and with Clive, basking beneath the Diego sun

On to Toronto where he'd grow into high school and find
His own groove of travelling, of football and skiing so fine
With his Swiss skiing coach, even Curt would attend
A man of the world, at ease with all, and all he'd befriend

I remember well our skiing holidays of 1994
When I got to go to the hockey game and see you score
An amazing year to be in Canada that very year was
Our skiing, our cooking, our convening for the cause

And onto the University of Chicago, a stunning architecture
Perhaps inspiring Ronnie to attend the urban planning lecture
Chicago so stunning as Mr. Burnham always planned
But even Mr. B couldn't hold to you as the Back Street Boys band

And 1999 back to travelling in the Galapagos Isles
What an extraordinary, how we travelled the miles
To travel back with Curt on the way to your sister's wedding
But Idaho was not for you but thank you for attending!

Toronto would beckon you back to the land you loved to ski
Along the way would be New York, but that was not to be
But most importantly was the time you heard her shout
Where true love did come in an instant with Jill ne'er a doubt

So in 2004, we gathered a week before the festivities begin
To honour your wedding in Calgary with guitar and violin
In a stunning chapel in the soaring mountains so unreal
So much love and family to witness and to heal

A honeymoon in Athens to time with the Olympic Game
I'll never forget the photo you sent of the Olympic Flame
But stunning in splendour, with Jill and Ron, what a two
So glad you escaped the pick pocketers, sighing phew!

And with Jill did you travel to another family calling north
To Montreal, to Ottawa, and many reunions so forth
What generosity and what responsibility did you and Jill bestow
To our family as we travelled and visited your town to show

I know Jill's family so appreciate the leadership you gave
To rebuilding their family home, their log cabin conclave
For always looking for ways to strengthen family ties
For always caring when we needed you for being so wise

In the meantime then came Louie, then Faith, then Anne
Ensuring the name Forder would not go to oblivion
What wonderful parents you and Jill are
Your children so fortunate to be born under your star

From Ottawa to Montreal, to New York and Maine
To find your groove near the coast to keep you sain
All signs pointed back to Ottawa, for kin and for career
To Commerce and then the City, and a way to steer

Through life's curve balls that God likes to throw
Through flooding, to downturns to loss you always show
Your resilience, your trust, your belief in God's plan
Not knowing why but just getting back up as you can

There is a word that is most valued amongst all my notions
And that is kindness which is both a value as well as an emotion
You embody this value, so very through and through
You give love all the time, and intolerance you eschew

You look for the justice and you care for the hurt
To those in pain you'd give your best shirt
Your family is priority and your love is splendour
As a sister, you look out for me and care as a mentor

And so you enter the fifth decade, a decade for easier growth
A time to enjoy the gifts you've earned, without a difficulty oath
An era to grow closer to God, as recognise His Presence
A stage to celebrate Ronald James in all of his Essence

So, lift your glass, and toast the moment.
That's all that there is, no need for torment.
About pasts that can't change, about futures that don't exist
About flaws, about jealousies, about pain that persists.

Thank God for our humanness, and thank God for this life.
Thank God for this music which seems so rife.
It teaches us of love, of tenderness, and care,
Of friendship, of honour, of giving beyond compare.

God grant us the serenity, God grant us the love
And steer us towards Heaven, which need not exist above.
Show us the way to Heaven here on Earth,
I trust Your guidance, and I honour Our worth.

I thank you Ron being there through thick and through thin
And I hope you know I love you, gazing at your photo with a huge giant grin
Such a very special brother celebrating his 40th bell
I love you so much more than I can ever tell

Love Maria

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