



Montauk, NY  
May 11, 2008

There are two moments in life for which there are truly no words. The moment you give birth to your child, and the moment you lose that child.

To watch any parent lose a child to terrorism, or a university gunman, or schoolhouse shooter, or even a roadside bomb halfway across the world brings back the days of my son's loss like a tsunami.

On December 21, 1988 my first born son, Alexander, was brutally murdered when Libyan terrorists planted a bomb aboard Pan Am Flight 103 which then exploded over the tiny Scottish town of Lockerbie Scotland. Just 21 years old, Alex died with 269 other people in that horrific tragedy. The bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 remained the largest terrorist attack against American civilians prior to September 11, 2001.

I have lived 19 Mothers Days since then, and soon there will be another. I know well the dread, anxiety and deep sadness. This year, I know there are thousands more who join me: more mothers, more wives, and more daughters who will have their first Mothers Day without the ones who meant the world to us.

I will get up on that day and buy beautiful spring flowers to bring to my son's grave; knowing it should be Alexander who brings the flowers to me. I will sit on the small bench that we placed there and think of all the "what ifs". What would he be like? Would he be married, have children, be happy in his job, would he still be surfing, which was his passion? There is so much that he and I missed!

Then I will see my younger son, Lucas; now our only living child, knowing that he misses his big brother to share in that big hug for his Mom. Realizing that he feels the burden of suddenly being our only child and needing to fill two pairs of shoes, especially on days like this. I will rejoice for the two sons I have, both in my heart, but only one with me that day.

Well meaning people say that it will get better with time or that time heals. But how can you possibly ever "get over" the death of your child? Today I hurt as much as the day we lost Alexander. The difference is that I have learned, over time, to better live with the tragedy of his death.

Mothers, all I can tell you to do is to continue living. I know that there are thousands of mothers out there, just like us. I know that Mothers Day is one of the worst days for all of us. No matter how much friends and family try to make it better, it remains a very lonely day.

As a sculptor, I can literally take my grief and form and shape it into something visual and touchable. I would go to my studio every day to portray myself the way I felt at the moment of receiving that awful phone call: raging, begging, and screaming. Somehow I felt that the work kept me close to the tragedy. It forced me to embrace and deal with what had happened. This is how my work called "Dark Elegy" started.

I eventually sculpted 76 women who had lost someone on Pan Am 103: 76 larger than life figures, every woman at the moment they heard the heartbreaking news. It took 16 years to create this memorial for my son and those who died with him.

My dream is to share this work in a public space to honor all victims of terrorism. This memorial stands as a reminder of how fragile we are and how easily we can lose those we love the most. It is also a reminder of what hate leaves in its wake, and my hope is that people will be more accepting of one another's differences and learn to love a little more. My family would love to find a public setting to which all people from all nations have access, because this memorial needs no language. It has no borders and is non-political. This depiction is understood by all who visit it.

For now, these 76 women sit in my garden. For two hours every day, we open our home to families from across the nation. We have met families from 9/11, families of murdered children, and others whose stories we will never know.

On this Mothers Day, I will once again sit on the little bench at his grave and reflect on what a wonderful young man and son Alexander was. I will feel grateful to have been able to show my boundless love for him. I will hope that by next Mothers Day, "Dark Elegy" may have a public home where we may honor all of our lost children.

*Suse Lowenstein is a sculptor in New York.*

*Visit [www.darkelegy103.com](http://www.darkelegy103.com) for more information about the sculpture memorial.*

*Join us as we work to find a permanent home for Dark Elegy.*