

# Frank's Passing

By Joseph Immel

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Frank Cook passed away this morning.

The doctor tells us there are multiple lesions in the brain and a large cystic mass in the leg. Frank seems nervous by that but still he is strong, even taking care of us. Memory is lapsing in and out, Hallucinations. He talks about going down to the Piedmont tomorrow for a plant walk. He talks about Artemesia...

We've been here a few days already but last night I came to the hospital a little late. Friends have prepared loving biscuits and homemade honey. Matthew is holding a shamanic ceremony and showing Frank mushrooms and Yarrow. Morgaine, distraught and exhausted for days, is loving and protecting Frank while giving him her strength. Frank is cooperating with the doctors, but in and out.

I wake up again in the early morning when I hear Frank's spirit come in and greet me saying, 'Hey Bro!' I thank God for having already gone through the anger, frustration, disappointment, and heaviness. So it's good to finally see him, "Hi Frank!" I say. He laughs at me, "Joseph what are you doing hanging out with my body. You're supposed to be hanging out with my spirit." And then adds a final dig - "When are you going to get that!" I smile and agree and suddenly I'm just hanging out with his spirit:

...I see a dark black and green smudge and I'm like, "Frank that's not your spirit." Then suddenly, right behind it, I see a light-green light. It's so pure and generous, full of love and courage. Then he says, "See Joseph my spirit still loves the plants! But it's not dark in here..."

I smile and prepare him some breakfast and drive over to the hospital to nourish his real body. When I get to the room it's empty. Behind me the chaplain comes and says that his condition has destabilized. "Oh my gosh," I hear him say in my mind. Paul is downstairs but I can't find him. Morgaine calls like a fierce lioness ready to protect Frank's spirit and respect him but she's sobbing and can hardly speak.

I'm totally numb, can't feel anything. I sit down, take my shoes off. Stand up. Shake it out. Make some gurgling noises. Can't believe this is happening. Okay Joseph, sit down again I tell myself. I'm in lotus pose. Ceara! I forgot to call Ceara. I call and Ceara comes.

A few minutes later his mother arrives - she is so bright, beautiful and strong but her eyes are droopy. His brother sad too but also ready to lift us all up and encourage us. His family is beautiful I think to myself. Finally, I get to go in the room and see Frank. I know already he's not breathing on his own anymore...There he is, lying like Jesus, completely unresponsive but his skin is warm. I touch his shoulder and repeat his words, "You are so good brother. Here we go - on the journey! Lifting it up!"

I hold his hand. I realize I'm crying and there are large strands of mucous hanging from my nose. I can't speak and every time I try to, it chokes me. Suddenly we're in the southwest together again, driving up the mountains. In the background I hear Morgaine and everyone, with all their dignity and divinity, singing songs about angels. But Frank and I are in the mountains. 'Can't you feel it!' he says to me, 'we're going up! Here we go. In the mountains the whole reality changes. You know in those valleys you can find all kinds of food and medicines. We don't have to survive, we can THRIVE! Look Joseph, over there, the elders are right on the peaks. The fathers are watching over us. Yeeeeeeaaaauhhhhh!"

I put my hands on his head. The room is full of people again. People are crying and still singing with the angels and the mother earth. It's so graceful. There are birds singing and a sycamore tree. I'm kneeling down holding his dreadlocks and Morgaine is whispering in his ear, "Frank it's time to go." She's nurturing him, holding him, and cooing to him in such gentle words I see Frank as a little baby for the first time. I see

his mother's labor pains and a wave comes over me - some tears and I breathe them out.

I leave the room. I stretch and shake my body up to the ceiling. Big stretch! "Om nama shivaya." I keep chanting to myself trying to lift the energy and let his spirit go. Don't hold on to any part of him Joseph. You have your own life to live. I keep trying to lift it, lift it, and suddenly I realize - "wait, letting go means letting it go down and up and the same time." My tears stop for a few moments. Frank's spirit comes and puts his hand on my kidneys, swiping his hand down my back to ground me saying, "Whooooosh..." I realize I'm dizzy, there are some stars in front of my eyes and I let my breathing go slow again.

The neurologist asks us back in the room. People are still singing. Grace is everywhere. Ken, his younger brother, puts his hand on Frank's heart. He's a robust man with strong hands, a shaved head, but I see him as little brother with a smile in his eyes looking at his big bro all gentle and emotional, crying and happy at the same time saying "Frank, you are my Peter Pan! You brought me places I could have never reached on my own." His mother holds his big feet saying, "Look how strong you are. You're my son but you are also my mentor. You drove me crazy but you also pushed me beyond my own limitations and I grew."

The doctor comes in the room. He asks the mother if she is ready to let Frank go. To pull out the tubes. She looks at me. If you've ever looked into a mother's eyes like that... I nod my head feeling a peacefulness and she nods her head. Everyone nods their head. We're ready and he's ready. This is it, the moment... All the plant walks, the dreams of India, the potential, the knowledge. It's slipping away. "Okay," I say to myself, "this is really going to happen."

The nurse, so gently, she comes up to Frank and says, "Sweetie, I'm sorry. This will take only a moment." She pulls the tube out quickly. It almost feels like she's whispering a little blessing to Frank as she does it. He lets out all of his breath. I feel his deep voice vibrating through my bones for the last time. We all exhale. We're rubbing and massaging his tissues. "Just relax brother. Just relax. It's okay to let go."

I look up to his face and I realize he's smiling. His spirit says, "You thought you knew what was going to happen, Joseph!" Then he says, "Just being in the flow here!" I realize he's still teaching me - and playing tricks too. "Here we go Frank!" I return the smile to encourage him. We're back in Nevada together. It's my first time and I feel so blessed he's initiating me. There are mountains and mountains for hundreds of miles across a vast expansive sky. "Joseph, the world is this big," he says as he opens his hands really wide.

Then I'm back in the room and his mother says, "You're my boy. I always knew this would happen to you. Look what's happened." Ceara is holding his hand. Juliet is kneeling at the bed. Paul and then Morgaine, and then me and then everyone comes to kiss his forehead. I step back from the body. The spirit is leaving. I feel as if it's not okay to touch him. His spirit is expanding and expanding. There is a wheel of blue and pink and it's spinning. "Frank, here we are buddy! Going up into the mountains - here we go!"

I step away. The lights are dim again. Everyone steps away except his mother who turns back to the body. She's hugging him with her big mother bear arms and talking to her baby with so much sympathy. I put my hands together in prayer. Namaste Frank...We love you.

