

You have to when you can
Part II
By Gail Grenier Sweet ©2003

It was the day before Thanksgiving and we had to be on a plane at 6:30 a.m. My suitcase sat empty and open on my bed, taunting me. I was facing my most dreaded chore: packing.

“I want to go to Boulder, I know we’re lucky to be able to fly, but it’s getting to be more and more effort to go anywhere,” I whined to Mike.

Mike had just visited his friend, a faithful co-worker who can no longer go to the office because emphysema has chained him to his bed and oxygen tank.

“Tom will never go on vacation again. You have to go when you can,” Mike said to me, effectively stopping my whining.

It was January 13 when we received this e-mail message in 24-point typeface from my cousin Phil:

“Lucky 13, my fifteenth heart transplant year begins today! Yeah man... and to celebrate, I awoke this morning to Jessica spraying me with some kind of funky peach body spray she got for Christmas.”

Phil received his new heart when he was 29. He later married, divorced, married again. About age 40, he became proud father to Jessica, the peach of his eye.

You have to when you can.

Yesterday, I answered the call from the Blood Center and trooped down to donate a pint of my precious Type O-Neg. I was filling out the forms there when I realized it was Jan.16. I hadn’t thought about that all day.

Jan. 16 was my brother George’s birthday. He would have been 38. George died in a car accident when he was only 13. He never got old enough to become a blood donor or do the hundreds of other ordinary things that fill our days as we grow older.

You have to when you can.

The End

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