

MY PRECIOUS SON has died.

Matthew Leigh (Matt) Morris was a sweetheart of a guy. As far as I know he never made an enemy in his life. Matt was smart and funny and handsome. He was a musical prodigy. He gave love and received love back in equal measure or more.

You can imagine the pride I felt writing those words. Perhaps you can imagine my pain as I write the rest of this.

Matt lived alone in a tidy apartment in The Colony, Texas, in a home filled with his musical instruments, his tributes to the Beatles, and eight or nine framed photos of his beloved niece Leighton arranged just so on his living room coffee table. Three police officers broke down his apartment door late Monday afternoon and found Matt unresponsive. A medical examiner pronounced him dead at the scene, age 46.

His mother Judy, sister Jennifer, and niece Leighton, his many friends scattered from Missouri to Iowa to Texas, and – yes – his father Mackie will never recover from losing Matt. We'll work through it. We'll keep on. But we'll struggle, and we won't ever get past it.

That's the pain. But here's the hope. Check that . . . here's my expectation: Leighton turned 15 only five days ago, and so she has decades ahead when she can excel as a dancer – or doing anything else she desires – when she can grow up, fall in love, seek her adventures, conquer her obstacles, and live her own full life. Judy, Jennifer, and I are holding those expectations next to our hearts. Maybe they'll fill the spaces between the broken pieces.

Please re-direct your thoughts and prayers toward your own acts of affection and support for those around you. Hug people. Don't let a day pass without professing your love. Understand how difficult this world has become and how tragic it is for great and talented people to search for happiness they never find.

Auden penned these words almost 90 years past. I never imagined they'd apply to me and my family, but now they do:

“The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun,
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods;
For nothing now can ever come to any good.”