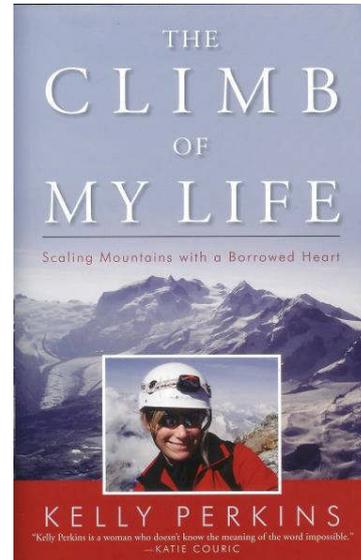


A Review of
The Climb of My Life
Scaling Mountains with a Borrowed Heart
Author: Kelly Perkins (Nov. 2007)

Reviewed by Jim Gleason, heart recipient

Some heart transplant patients may describe their medical challenge as a “mountain to climb” type event in their life, but in Kelly Perkins’ case this is not an analogy but her true life story. Facing death or the alternative of a heart transplant, she chooses life along with all its uncertainties, painful procedures, expensive side-effect filled lifetime of medications and life challenges. As all of us who experience a close encounter with death and live to see the light of another day through the miracles of organ donation and transplantation, Kelly is faced with the question of what to do with this gift of new life after she received her heart transplant in November of 1995 at the young age of 34. Her answer is more daunting than any I have ever heard before as she takes up a goal of raising organ donor awareness worldwide in resuming her passion for mountain climbing with this “borrowed heart,” eventually climbing many of the world’s most famous peaks to demonstrate the success of heart transplantation.



Kelly takes us with her (along with her loving caregiver husband, Craig, and an assortment of other mountain climbing friends) as she braves life and limb on the coldest and most treacherous climbs, sharing through photos and descriptive language views from all the major mountains, but especially Mt. Fuji, where releasing the ashes of her donor from that peak makes this climb even more special and we share in her tears at the emotional and majestic scene. While most of us may never climb in the same way as Kelly, at the same time she offers inspiration to everyone who faces their own valleys and peaks in waiting for and then later, post transplant. This is not a book for the weak of heart, but for anyone who wants to believe in the human spirit being able to overcome obstacles, this is breathtaking reading. For the medical community, this will serve to show you what life can really be like in the positive extreme after a life saving transplant. For caregivers, Craig’s love and support will bring tears to your own eyes. For everyone, Kelly achieves her goal of showing us why it is the greatest gift to be an organ donor, taking her own donor heart to heights it never got to in life itself, but now enjoys as she uses it to touch the heavens in her climbing triumphs.

Hers is a love story of three hearts, her own failing one, that of a donor she eventually gets to know about, and a third of her loving and ever supportive husband, Craig. Kelly, thank you for touching our hearts with your love story of amazing accomplishments, inspiring each of us to reach new personal heights, driven by the passion of dreams to overcome our own life’s challenging peaks.

Note: **The Climb of My Life** is available in hard cover from Amazon.com or BarnesandNoble.com

Brief bio:

Jim Gleason, receiving his own heart transplant Oct. '94, retired after 37 years with Unisys Corporation in 2005, is a volunteer with NKF and UNOS as well as a nationally recognized speaker and author. His own book, **A Gift from the Heart**, is offered free in thanks to his donor family and can be obtained by contacting him at GLEASONJIM@AOL.COM.