

A Review of
Stories From Her Journey

Author: Liz Maxwell

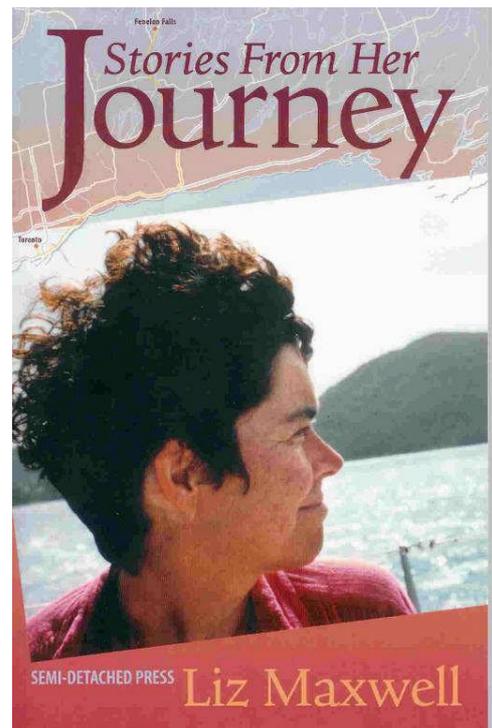
Reviewed by Jim Gleason, heart recipient

If you are looking for a book on transplants, this isn't it. This is a book about living life to its fullest despite an interruption for a life saving transplant. In this collection of writings by Liz Maxwell, we find just four insightful reflections about facing and later receiving a liver recipient. Liz shares her anxiety in waiting, being kept afloat by a strong determination to go on living, and following successful surgery, participating in and winning a medal at the World Transplant Games.

Born in 1948, Liz shares her growing up in the 50's and 60's through twenty-seven easy reading stories (less than 4 pages each), building a relationship with and giving the reader insights into this girl who becomes the woman of the transplant story. In her engaging writing style, you can almost hear her shouting "**Yahooo!**" as, at age 56, 12 years after her transplant, she comes hurtling down the Vermont hillside on her bike at "*47 km per hour*" with 22 fellow grey haired "*self-proclaimed biker babes!*" With this same passion she describes beginning training again the very day after her transplant surgery, five years later completing the 3K run at the 1997 World Transplant Games in Australia. You can feel her emotions back on that starting line as she describes when the call went out: "**Runners take your marks!**" and continues, "***I shifted my weight on to my front foot, leaned forward and waited for the starter's pistol. It was then the tears began streaming down my cheeks.***" And in another poignant example, in response to a creative writing assignment to "Write a letter you will never send," in **Dear, Dear Friend** she shares her note to the person she never knew, the anonymous donor of her life saving liver. Liz captures the reader with her emotions, so be ready to share her tears in your reading.

In summary, the tone of her outlook on life can be seen as she writes: "***Strangely, it has been an uplifting experience to be so close to death.***" Liz offers us lessons to be learned from the transplant experience, sharing how her life was different afterwards and her blessing of seeing the outpouring of support and love from so many. She closes with a wish for each of us "***...and so I hope that you were able to experience all this love in your last days.***" Liz Maxwell passed away in the summer of 2005 at the age of 57. Four writing companions have kept her memory alive by publishing this collection of her writings with hopes of passing along Liz's message to the world to be an organ donor.

Note: **Stories From Her Journey** is available in paperback from SEMI-DETACHEDPRESS@sympatico.ca (a not-for-profit organization that donates all



proceeds to support causes relating to organ donation such as transplant research, education, recipient support and donor encouragement).

Brief bio:

Jim Gleason, heart transplant Oct. '94, retired after 37 years with Unisys Corporation in 2005, is a volunteer with Gift of Life Donor Program in Philadelphia, 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.