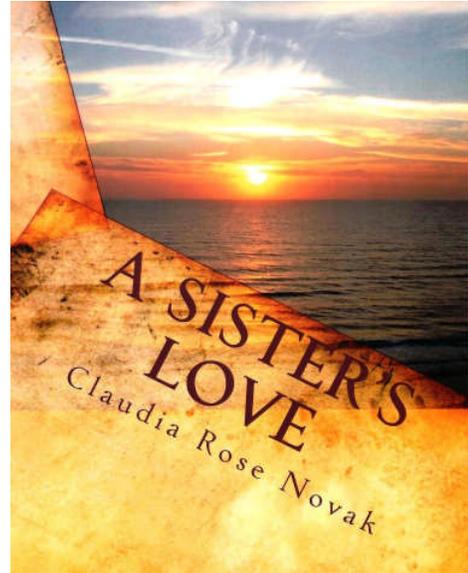


A Review of

## *A Sister's Love (2010)*

Author: Claudia Rose Novak

In a large format book with easy to read large font, this 105 page book with its 34 colorful photos (the author's hobby) is a quick reading that takes us into the yearlong experience of a loving caretaker supporting her sister who awaits either death or a lifesaving liver transplant. In the early parts of the book it may seem like too much daily detail in the telling, but that trivia really is an integral part of the message, that waiting is a long drawn out process. Each day is just that, another day of routine living, interrupted in this case by medical challenges and emotions of desperation and doubts. Add to that the physical effects of a liver that is not filtering the poisons in the patient's blood and you have



outbursts and behavior that is not that person's norm, requiring a whole lot of family love and support to work through. As if that's not enough, as often happens, they find themselves living in a city distant from home in order to have the best chance of a donor liver become available in time to avert death that is coming closer with each day. This story, written four years later, is a tale as told by one of two sisters, who in family love, leaves home and friends to stand by the side of their sister, Norie.

Norie has lived with hepatitis from a blood transfusion for twenty-five years, waited in Phoenix for three and a half years on the transplant list before, the focus of this book, a final full year of waiting in Jacksonville at the famous Mayo Clinic, as a final hope of receiving that transplant in time. Through the author's eyes and words we see the power of support groups (i.e., the local TRIO Chapter in Jacksonville as one example), prayer (even a doctor's prayers for this patient) and a family's supportive love. As they wait, in sharing other patient's stories, she doesn't shield the reader from the reality of the situation as some get turned away, some give up and leave while others don't make it and die waiting or even die shortly after their transplant, each leaving their impact on the families still left hoping and praying for the best. We follow alongside as even Norie faces despair and depression, adding more challenge to the daily wait. "Surrounded by angels.." they never gave up on God. Norie had a deep foundation built upon her many years knowing she had hep-c during which she prepared herself for this stage of her life. As the author, Claudia, pointedly reminds us, "***There are both good days and bad days. Like everything else in life, the bad days will eventually pass.***"

While it seemed so clear cut at the time, her sister had to get the liver or die, there are some interesting inner reflections from this time of uncertainty as she writes, "***...I also wondered what I would have chosen for myself, if I had been in her position. Would I have chosen to spend what little time I had left, with my loved ones, or taken a chance in the game of life and waited for another liver?***" And she goes on to give us a few more questions like that that only have answers in actually having to face the situation ourselves to be able to honestly answer.

Finally, a full year of waiting later, Norie gets that liver transplant and we get to see her photo taken just hours after, looking so great, in the picture on page 96, in stark contrast

to the one taken before as shown on the previous page. Claudia captures that difference in colorfully describing her sister during the long wait as the Eyor character (from the Pooh children's stories) and now, after successful surgery, transformed into Tiger of the same stories, a visual image that speaks a thousand words.

Claudia, thanks for letting us into your personal "diary" during this very difficult and emotional life challenge.

PS: Don't miss the "angels" in the book's cover photo – think cloud formations and you will see them.

Note: This softback book is available at <http://www.amazon.com> or <http://wwwcreatespace.com/3441854>

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**Reviewer bio:** Jim Gleason, receiving his own heart transplant Oct. '94, retired after 37 years with Unisys Corporation in 2005, is a volunteer with NKF, UNOS, TRIO and the Gift of Life Donor Program in Philadelphia, as well as a nationally recognized speaker and author. His own book, **A Gift from the Heart**, is offered in thanks to his donor family and can be obtained on a CD without cost by contacting him at GleasonJim@aol.com