MARCH **WHOSE PUDDING IS THIS?** **2026**

Hellooo friends!



My very necessary, 4 days in Cape Town for Una's 70th birthday was **beyond incredible!** It's been nearly 9 years since the passing of their daughter Andrea and she is still missed at every event.

God stepped into a dire situation and turned it into a most perfect evening for her fabulous party in their small back yard.

20 close friends came bringing flowers, gifts, cake, food, 2 gazebo's and so much fun, laughter and love for this amazing couple.



I was the hair and make-up stylist, and made myself useful with the snacks and dishes. I felt humbled and so privileged to stay in the home of these two warriors of faith whose lives have been challenged by more than many of us would be able to cope with. They are brave survivors!

BEING BRAVE

So many people tell **me** how brave I am and how strong I am – but me, myself, I have never claimed to be brave or strong😊

In our 11 years as a missionaries to Russia – I **did** many brave things, despite being scared spitless, but driving a different car, or driving a far distance – no way Hosey!

I've overcome many insecurities in this, my new season of life – like going to a restaurant by myself, sleeping in a house by myself, being alone etc. but when Robert and Megan, for our trip to Uitenhage in my car asked, *"**aren't you driving**?"* I had to respond, "*I'm not there*" and it wasn't even followed by a, "*yet*." 😊

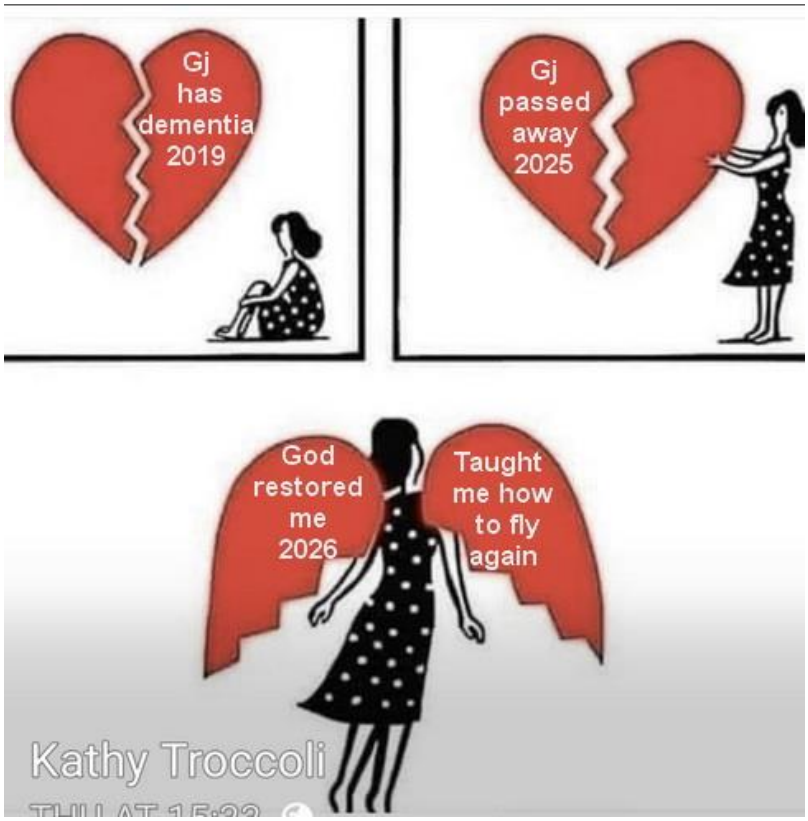
Gertjan did all the far driving for the whole of our 32 years of marriage! All the driving I did was here in PE where I confidently zip around in places where I know where I'm going.



I once ventured to Jeffrey's Bay, but I had the whole family in the car with me – extra eyes to spot the unexpected, and still, I would prefer to not do that again.

One person's insecurities are another's brave – and heading towards my 70th birthday later this year – a girl can surely put a limit on how many brave things she wants to do?

If ever a picture would explain my life from January 2019 to January 2026, it would be this one.



Psalm 30:11,12 says:
You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, to the end that my soul may sing praise to You and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

Psalm 147:3 - *He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.*

I still miss Gertjan, I still shed tears sometimes,
but I don't feel so **broken** anymore.
I have a more confident sense of wholeness.

MY BOOK

In my letters over the years, I came across where I wrote about how I was "writing my book." That book went to lie down during Gj's disease, and will be taken up again one day but for now I'm busy with this 2nd book about my 5-year journey with Gj having this disease.

I started from 2019 and I'm now at the end of 2022 = 3 years **in** when things started to get serious and I wasn't coping.

Suddenly a painful grief filled my chest for what Gertjan went through – it was so intense that I almost couldn't breathe, I had to leave the writing for a few hours to regain my emotional strength before I could continue writing.

I returned to my writings and when I looked again it was **3am!** I went to bed smiling to my Father for ending that day's writing with memories of when Gj was SO CUTE! Even in his state of dementia, he brought us much joy on many occasions. You'll read them when my book comes out 😊

WHOSE PUDDING IS THIS?

"*Whose pudding is this*?" one asks.

We all check to see who has a bowl;

turns out we ALL have our bowl of pudding, and suddenly I realize that

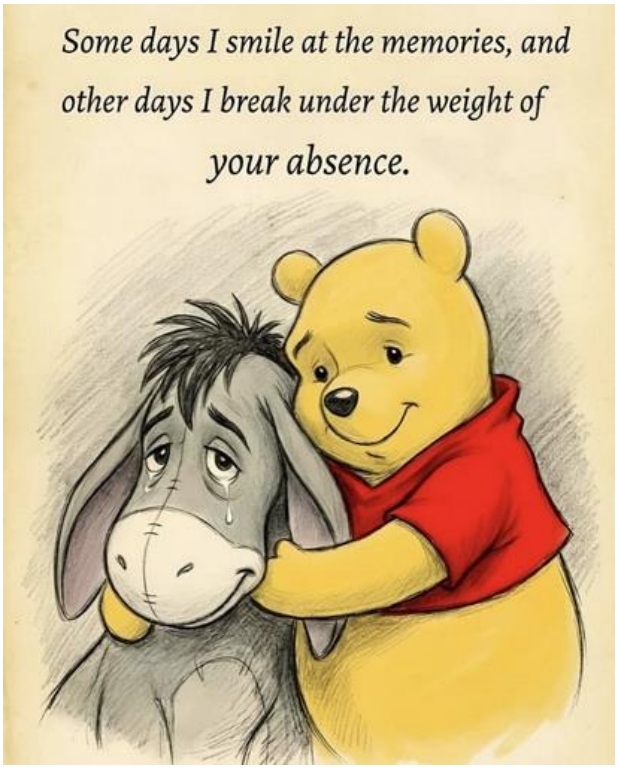
I dished up 6 bowls of pudding!

for our regular family gathering of the 6 of us –
forgetting that we are now only **5** because Gj is no longer here.
Gj's bowl was consumed very quickly by one of us pudding lovers.



Photo from 2023 I think

I CLOSE WITH A SPECIAL POEM



When someone you love dies,
It changes your life forever.
Not in small ways, not in temporary ways. in "before and after" ways.

There is a version of you that existed when they were here.
And there is a version of you learning to live now that they are not.

It is not something you "get over." You don't climb a mountain of grief and plant a flag at the top that says, "Finished."
You carry it.

Some days it is light, like a folded letter in your pocket.
Some days it is heavy, like a stone in your chest.
But it stays. because they mattered.
Because love does not disappear just because a heartbeat does.

The loss becomes a part of who you are.
It softens you; it deepens you.
It makes you notice things you never noticed before.
It changes how you love, how you speak.
How you hold the people who are still here.



Grief becomes woven into your story.
Not as the only chapter— but as one that shaped you.

And though the ache remains, so does the love.
You are not broken for still feeling it. You are human.

When someone you love dies, you do not move on.
You move forward— with them carried quietly inside your heart. ♡

Friend, you bless my life and I love and appreciate you for being in my life, for making time to spend with me and for your support in so many ways.
Much love, Judy