

*Reply to Joanna (aka Anne B Murray)*

Dear Joanna,

You may not remember that when I was a young man, I not only loved music but climbing mountains and rambling in the countryside, activities that bought me almost as much pleasure as you and Liza did. But in middle age I developed an illness that became so bad I needed a wheelchair. There was no cure. For a while I was angry I could no longer do some of the things that gave my life meaning and provided so much pleasure. I'm ashamed to admit that for a time I made Lisa's life a misery.

Then a friend told me how lucky I was to have such wonderful memories of mountains I'd climbed, not just in Scotland, Wales and England, but in France, Spain and Switzerland. At first I was angry with him, but when I told him I'd also ventured into the Himalayas, I felt a smile cross my face and I saw the grin on his. "I know," he said, "but I wanted you to remember."

For the rest of my life on earth in that wheelchair, I crossed space and time and was simultaneously fighting off midges on my sweat covered face as I descended from Ben Nevis, admiring the fierce wildcat I saw as I crossed the Pyrenees from France into Spain, struggling through horizontal rain as I made my way up Arran's Goat Fell, thanking the stranger who gave me his water after my rucksack with all its provisions fell off a narrow ridge in the Alps and so many other memories that continue to live. Every one of these was not only part of my past, but is part of my present and of my future. They were and are a part of me.

I cannot interfere in your world. But I can tell you that all the music you helped create is not only in your past, it is in your present: it is with you now. Listen. Can you hear it? It sounds as good now as when we made it together. And it is also in your future: for as long as you are, the music will be there in you. So play, play it with joy. And perhaps someone – an adult in despair or a lonely child – will hear you, find you and play with you, bringing both of you joy.

Until we meet again,

Harry. (aka Kevin Crowe)