

## MY GRIEF LETTER TO YOU, HUGA

Huga!! I miss you everyday, I love you! I am writing you this letter to tell you more about our journey, to tell you how strong you are and how brave you are!! You are one of a kind! I don't personally know anyone who had fought this kind of battle the way you did. I am very, very proud of you my love!! I love you! So here it is, get ready as this can be lengthy haha!! Listen patiently as you are always patient to me.

Late November to early December. These were the times that you said that you started feeling this so-called "stomach pain". I didn't notice right away that you were losing your appetite little by little during these times, considering we don't really eat on time or should I say we would just eat whenever we felt hungry. I realized later on that you were sleeping a lot more because of the pain you were experiencing especially after work. You felt these symptoms more when your 2-week vacation started. You were not eating as usual, complaining more of bloatedness and stomach pain. Then around Christmas time, you asked me to call your doctor and book an appointment with her. This hit me that something was really going on since you asked it yourself to book the appointment. However, not really thinking anything worse from it because a stomach bug had been going on around our household at the same time. Your 2-week vacation turned into three weeks, into 4, 5, 6 weeks...

January 3rd, at the doctor's office. I can tell you that I was not expecting anything at all at this appointment. I just knew that you were experiencing stomach pain all along, not until you spoke and talked about what you were feeling and what had been happening. Hearing all these things coming from you made me anxious and thinking of the things or instances that could be different from what you were used to doing or felt different about. But knowing you, you were the type of person who does not express himself as vocally as others. This could be your way of protecting me like you always used to do. Your doctor was ruling out gastritis at this time and gave you some bloodwork to do and medication to take. After your doctor's appointment, I remember asking you why you waited this long before seeing our doctor. I have these questions that deep in myself, I knew that you would not answer back and being you, you're not the typical person who goes to the doctor all the time rather a wait and see type of person. Leaving the clinic, my mind was going crazy thinking what could I have done differently for you to go see your doctor earlier. Should I be more observant with what had been happening to you -- I realized you were not your usual self during those weeks that you were experiencing this "stomach pain". If I asked you, you were only telling me that your stomach was hurting. Other than that, NOTHING. Nothing that would make me push you harder to go to the doctor. Or maybe, you were not telling me everything because you knew that I would nag you and push you more to see the doctor.

You asked for another week off to let the medication do its job. January 13th, you went to work as usual. I went on my usual routine, got our daughter ready for school, dropped her off and went on with my day. Until you called me around 9:30ish in the morning and told me that your stomach was not settling and you were coming home and told me that we should go to the ER. I dressed up and got ready, called the school to let them know we were picking up our daughter early. I was in a state of rush at this point. We went to the Misericordia emergency. You were triaged and we waited there for about a couple hours until you were taken to your bed. They did their assessment on you. Bloodwork done. Ordered an ultrasound for you to see what was going on. Results unremarkable for your

bloodwork and ultrasound. The doctor then decided to give you this pink drink to settle your stomach. Pain was relieved for a little bit. We were there for a very long time and they didn't even consider giving you a painkiller. It was awful. I literally saw your pain from my very eye, unfortunately I can't do anything about it. I cannot even take away even a bit of it. Between the two of us, I am the one who has a higher tolerance for pain. You were like a baby when you were not feeling good, haha! Then they sent us home. We went on with our routine and did what the doctor told us to do. Every single thing. You know me when it comes to medications or anything to do pertaining to our health. You have seen me do this for our daughter as well. And I knew you knew that I would do anything and everything for the two of you. You then asked the doctor to have another week off from work and see what would happen.

January 19th came, I didn't go to work. Around 6:00ish in the morning, you cannot bear the pain and it seemed that the medication was not working. We decided to go to the emergency again, but this time at the University of Alberta hospital. I would have drove you there to the hospital but you said you would, even when you were experiencing pain. You were that person. One of the many, many reasons I missed about you. So we got there at the emergency, you were triaged. Luckily it was not very busy at all when we arrived. Shortly after, we were taken at the back and given a bed. The usual -- assessment from the nurse then the doctor came. Asked everything, I mean everything. At this point, you had these symptoms around 7-8 weeks already. Ordered blood work, considered having a GI consult for a possible endoscopy. Then the waiting game began. We were there in that very small space waiting while you were sleeping on the bed. They gave you medications. GI resident came and talked to us. Asking eveeerythingggg! Moments after, here came the GI resident with the GI attending. They told us that at this point, the scope will not benefit you. Hearing this from the specialist pushed me down a bit, thinking that we were going back to square one again. And they said because there was no basis for doing the scope since the bloodwork results came back good. We then waited again and in my mind I don't really know what the next plan could be. At this point, we don't have any precise diagnosis. We were dealing with something we didn't know. We were fighting with something we didn't know. From our small space, they asked us to move into the small waiting area since they knew that we will be discharged soon. They did this to make way for new patients even though you were still suffering from pain. While waiting, I told you that if they would not push through on the scope, I would demand a CT scan exam for you. I was assertive at this point and I would "demand" from them because I knew they would have seen something from the CT scan. Almost 8 hours in the emergency room, the ER doctor called us and pulled us back into another room. He then again checked you. And he told us that the GI attending finally decided to book you for a scope which was on January 22nd, Wednesday. The ER doctor then told us that if anything came up again between now until your scope appointment, to come back to the ER again for re-assessment. At this point they cannot do anything until the scope.

January 22nd Wednesday. I was not expecting this day to be of any sort of "one of those days". We left the house early, roads were not very good plus the rush hour. We were even a bit late to the appointment because of the traffic. I asked you if I should drive but you insisted that you would. The typical you! So here we were at the scope appointment, we checked in and waited for your turn. When they called you in, we were just waiting outside until your scope was done. Until the time they told me your procedure was done unfortunately you were getting admitted. Different thoughts came rushing on my mind.

Knowing me, I tend to overthink sometimes, or should I say all the time. My mind would go down the lane very fast scanning through any possible scenarios there could be. We were called inside to sit beside you and told us to wait for the doctor to come talk to us. When the doctor came and said they saw something they never expected. My mind started spinning again. Slowly taking the information the doctor was telling us. I would tell you, you were very quiet and I knew that you were in a bit of shock too! When the doctor became hesitant to tell us what he saw because Janella was there with us. I have that gut feeling that something has gone bad. I knew you did too! I then told our daughter to just watch a movie on her iPad and wore her headphones. I turned her back around from the doctor. Then the doctor continued to explain what was going on. He said that what he saw "could" be cancer. This news crushed our world. Nothing was definite at this point, but hearing this was very heartbreaking. I saw your reaction and I knew that a lot of thoughts had been going on your mind as well. We cried. Being me, I knew that I had to be your strength, your rock moving forward. I tried my very best and am still trying. You knew very well that I am a crier. Getting this kind of news, what could you expect? Rush of emotions, thoughts... again being the typical me, I usually tend to read more of what I've been told. But this time, I did not! I did not because I would just scare myself more. I did not because I don't want to put more burden on me, on us. I did not for the sake of my vanity. I did not because I know that we could fight anything together. We would win anything and everything thrown at us. They got some samples from your tumors and were sent to the laboratory for biopsy. Around 1ish pm, we were told we got a bed. We were transferred upstairs. We agreed that we would not tell our family about what we were told until we got a final diagnosis. We only told them that you were being admitted to be observed. We brushed off the idea of cancer at this point as nothing was certain. Couple days or so until they could give us something. We were hopeful, knowing that God is with us. Couple days, three days passed. Results came back inconclusive. Questions in my mind were running in circles. How could that be? How could it be that the samples from the tumors itself came back inconclusive? How could it be that after waiting for days, the results came back inconclusive? How could it be inconclusive? Days passing by and we were wasting precious time on diagnosing your illness. So then they told us that they would take another set of samples from you. Hopefully it could be done over the weekend, but it didn't. It happened Monday morning, January 27th. I received your text message saying that you will be taken down to have your scope. They took you down to the GI department early in the morning. I came to the hospital right away after dropping off Janella at school. I waited outside of the scope department and waited until they wheeled you back to your room. I was fervently praying for the results to come back as favorable as possible. After your procedure, our day went by as usual. Waiting for the results... until the morning of January 29th (kuya Rod's birthday), around 10ish, the GI resident came down to see us and talked to us. She was the one who told us the gruesome results of the biopsy. She confirmed to us that it WAS CONCLUDED TO BE GASTRIC CANCER. Our world is crushed down just like that!! I can't help but bawl my eyes out!! You were crying! I could see all those pain radiating from your eyes. You could not even utter a word. I whispered a prayer to God, surrendering your life and surrendering our family's lives all to Him. The doctor left us crying. I hugged you. I hugged you very tight and assured you that everything would be fine. That God would not leave us in this difficult time. We let ourselves settle from the news we heard. We agreed that we would not tell our families about this over the phone. You then messaged your mom and asked them to come over to the hospital. They rushed down to the hospital. I knew that they could sense something was up. Your mom and your older brother came and you told them. They were heartbroken. Shortly after, your youngest brother came with her girlfriend and you told him. A lot of tears shed in that hospital room. After what happened, I texted my brother to pick up Janella from

school and to drop her off at the hospital. He agreed. I met them outside the hospital, and he asked me how everything was. I told him you were diagnosed with cancer. He was shocked. Tears came running down my face and they drove away. There I was with Janella walking towards the hospital wearing my brave face. I don't want Janella to see or feel something was different. I wanted to shield her from everything that would possibly hurt her. The day went on... I still don't have the courage to tell my family what had happened. In my mind, everything could fall into its right places at the right time. But knowing that my brother already knew, he would tell our family right away. In the afternoon of the same day, I received a text message from Nigel asking how everything was, asking how were you doing. I tried calling him but it was not connecting. Until he called me from his work phone. I don't know how to say something bad happened, in a good way. There was no way it could be done that way. I told him you had cancer and everything went in silent. So silent that I could hear every minute sound from that hallway of the hospital. An hour or so later, I felt this courage inside me to call my mom. Once she answered, I blurted out you had cancer and just broke down from there. I was crying my heart out, bawling my eyes out!! You were in the room while I talked to them. Couple of our friends called me upon hearing this devastating news. You didn't know a thing that happened outside of that hospital room, unless I told you so. I resisted to tell you because I don't want to add more burden on your shoulders. I would do anything and everything for you!! At this time, we don't know the extent of it. We were told it could be in the early stage and surgery could be done. Until the images and the report were reviewed by the surgical oncologist. We were expecting to hear from him anytime of the day. Around 8 in the evening, when the surgical team came and talked to us. He said that he wanted to explore your abdomen and they would book a laparoscopy the next day. He told us that considering the extent of the cancer, surgery would not be an option at this time. He told us too, that when they do a lap procedure, surgery would NEVER be an option. Our little glimpse of hope crushed!!! Again!! You went back to your room to digest the information we had received. What a horrible day this would be!! Any more information?? Imagine starting the day with bad news to ending the day with another bad news!!! I really never imagined that I would go through this, that we would go through this. Never in my crazy mind!! They added that they were referring us to the Cross Cancer Institute. I waited until they could tell me that we got a date. But no! I was told that they could not give any appointment until you were discharged. And I asked the nurses and doctors, how come that they will not book you in while you were admitted? I told them, what if you would stay at the hospital longer? What if you would not be discharged right away? Would that be a hindrance for you not to have a consultation at the CCI and affect your quality of care? Of course not, I would not let that happen!! I followed up everyday. Over and over and over again... and finally!!! They told me they booked you in for your first consult on February 18th. I felt happy that we had this date! But I don't know what to expect. In my mind, we would just be talking about your treatment plan.

OH BOY!!! THIS WAS HARD! RELIVING EVERYTHING. I WOULD NOT CHANGE ANYTHING THOUGH. THIS IS OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER, our fight together! I can retell our journey to you every single day, I will not get tired of doing this. And I can tell you every little detail of it, still so vivid in my mind. I even remember telling you while we were walking that this journey was all in God's plan. That all of the people in the world had their own share of trials and problems, and this was ours -- GASTRIC CANCER. God will not give this to us if He knew that we could not get through it!! I hoped that by me saying this to you made you relieved even just for a little. Because I know that there were no words to tell you that everything would be alright. On a side note, thinking about everything that had happened I cannot believe that I have done this all. I was in awe that I got to handle this

kind of situation with a vigilant mind and body. One thing I am sure of, I have done this all because of you. And most especially with God by our side. Because I know that without Him, everything will turn upside down in a glimpse of an eye.

Fast forward to your stent insertion. This was a big adjustment. Having a foreign object inside the body felt different. The body needed to adjust to the new normal. You were vomiting from this. You experienced muscle spasms, which seemed like you were having a heart attack. Then came February 10th, a few decisions at the hospital unit by the manager, made you angry and frustrated and just chose to go home. We did, because even the doctors cannot do anything about it. Paperworks after paperworks. A visit to our family doctor happened right after discharge for follow up and medications.

At home, I fixed our bedroom to fit the recliner chair. This will serve as your bed to make you as comfortable as possible. With the stent being inserted, the entry to your stomach was not closing anymore. This could cause fluids to go up which would make you uncomfortable. You tried though, you tried lying down on our bed beside me. Looking for comfortable sleeping positions all throughout the night. I was awake most of the time while you're awake. If I fell asleep though, you would choose not to disrupt my sleep the best you can. But reassuring you over and over again that I would like to be woken up if you would need anything. Like literally anything!! You would not though, so typical of you! You know what, I can say that even though you were very sick, you would still think of me. You would still consider me getting sleep and rest rather than serving you of what you needed. I MISS YOU!! I MISS US!! I MISS US BEING TOGETHER!!

You spent almost a week at home until February 14th. Our friends invited us for a birthday dinner. You told us to go, and I told you I would just be quick. Your mom stayed with you while we were out. We came home, everything was fine until I heard that you were having hard time breathing. I ran to see you and was asking you if you would be okay with me driving you to the emergency. You were not responding to me. And I could see that it was getting intense. I was asking you if I would just call 911 and get help. You were not responding either. Seconds felt like hours, minutes felt like days waiting for you to respond. I ended up calling 911 anyways. I was on the phone with them while holding you in my arms. Talking to you at the same time that you have to stay with me. This was very horrifying!! A very dreadful 911 call!! This seemed to be the emergency call that took so long. Waiting for them to come seemed like years! I have to stay strong though! I have to stay strong for you, for our family even though deep inside me I was in a panic mode. I was monitoring the outdoor camera as well and seeing the fire truck drive past our house, I frantically told the 911 operator that they passed by our house. I remembered telling the operator to let them know and to drive back right away. I could feel my body shaking. We were wasting a lot of time. This could be anything from muscles spasms like before to a possible heart attack. So they came and rushed to our room in the basement. They assessed you and carried you upstairs while the EMS crew waited outside with the gurney. My body felt the trembles, my mind was going crazy with what could possibly happen. However I still need to be strong and as focused as I can be for you. I am your voice!! I am your advocate!! Before we left the house, my sister in law offered to call our parents to come home. But they knew something was up upon checking our doorbell camera notifications and they saw that there were fire trucks and EMS at home. The EMS crew drove us to Misericordia. I was asking them to drive us directly to the University of Alberta hospital emergency but unfortunately they could not. Dispatch protocols... we arrived at the emergency, you were triaged and sent to the

hallway to wait. Waiting was terrible especially in this situation. After an hour or so, you were given a bed. The nurse assessed you, then the doctor came. They did a cardiac workup to make sure everything was fine. Thank GOD!!! It was! The doctor told us that it was another episode of muscle spasms. I would tell you honestly, this made me so scared!! Scared for your life! Scared for our lives!! We were then sent home with another medication to prevent your muscle spasms from getting worse.

Until the midnight of February 16th Sunday, you expressed to me that you were feeling tightness on your chest. I asked you if you were comfortable making our way to the emergency before it got worse and you agreed. There we were at approximately 1 in the morning driving down the Whitemud Drive on the way to the University of Alberta hospital emergency. When we were approaching the emergency, I asked you if I should park first or I would drop you off and then park. You said to park and we would just walk even though you were having pains. We arrived and you were triaged. I answered all of the nurse's questions. I could give them answers as detailed as it could get. We sat in the waiting room and not too long we were called to go in. You were given medications right away, they could see your pain getting intense minute by minute. We stayed there until they could get us a room upstairs. They decided to admit you again. They ended up doing another scope for you to see what was going on. After your procedure the GI said, you were bleeding a little bit inside. Looking at his face, I could tell that it was not looking good. I cried. Because I could sense how bad it was but it seemed that they could not tell my face what the real extent of your disease was.

Came February 18th Wednesday (Tito Boyet's birthday), this was your first consultation with Dr. Joseph at the Cross Cancer Institute. You were transferred by the EMS to CCI. Dr. Joseph met with us and was explaining why we were there, what the treatment plan be and what we would expect to do on that day. The appointment seemed to be going good until we heard that the monster, the GASTRIC CANCER, we were fighting with was **incurable**. **These words stole you from me, from our little family. It stole you from us earlier than I would have expected.** You cannot contain yourself upon hearing this. The world smacked us down the second time around!! I hugged you tight! I hugged you and whispered to you that His will will be done. I lifted everything up to Him once again. Your illness, our problems -- our lives! I lifted your life and our lives to Him!! I know that this was very difficult and no words could comfort you. But hey!! This is our journey. I would fight with you and for you until my last breath. I waited for information to settle in my mind. Until I could tell my mom what we heard and told her to buy the medication from the Philippines that we were talking about. I don't really care at this point how much it would cost me considering the shipping cost. All that matters was for you to get the chance to try those. And for me, it was something that does not need a lot of thinking. My goal at that time was to get those medications as soon as possible so you could try them. After that brief moment, we were told you were scheduled to get a CT scan done for treatment planning. When you were done with your appointment, we were just waiting for the EMS crew to take you back to the hospital. From here, we waited again to call us for radiation therapy treatment.

February 22nd, this marked our 6th wedding anniversary. Nothing special was planned, but you know what spending the day with you was way more than special to me.

Then I was told we were booked for 5 radiation treatments. We were being taken by the EMS crew to CCI for your treatments. Do you remember, I always talked about how

inquisitive I am with the ambulance? How fascinated I was seeing the ambulances here compared to what we had in the Philippines. Never in my wildest dream that my first ever ambulance ride was to bring you over to the CCI for your radiation treatment. Never!!

February 26th. This marked my birthday. It was just an ordinary day, I expected nothing other than to spend it with you. To be beside you on my birthday. I didn't even expect for you to greet me, for you to remember that it was my birthday. That would be so self-centered of me considering what you were going through with your illness plus your radiation treatment. You were not feeling good at all because you were experiencing side effects from your radiation treatments. And it was home time, I told you that I will be back tomorrow morning. You pulled me back and you said we had to sing a happy birthday. I uttered to who? And you said, for you, it's your birthday today. And you started singing. My heart melted!! I did not expect that at all. That made my birthday extra special!! You did not forget about it after all! But you know what came to my mind, could this be my last birthday with you? In all honesty, I DO NOT KNOW!! I am lifting everything up to God!

Days passed... we were still at the hospital. It seemed though that we were getting comfortable at the hospital and not really thinking about going home or getting discharged anytime soon. But remember what I told you, it doesn't matter how long it would take us to stay there at the hospital. As long as you were comfortable and your pain was being managed then I am okay with it. Of course I would love for you to be home with us. But how could I be so egocentric and think of that. That's how much I love you! Driving to and from the hospital had been my daily life routine for almost two months. I didn't complain. I never felt tired of it. The adrenaline my body had was unexplainable. Thinking about it, I never thought that I could do such a thing.

Palliative team at the University of Alberta hospital was checking up on you every now and then. Around the 2nd week of March, the nurse came and talked to us about getting referred to the Palliative Unit at the Grey Nuns hospital. She explained that GNH is one of the best and the tertiary Palliative Care unit in Northern Alberta. She also told us that we kind of hit the wall to how far they could offer help to us. The stigma around palliative care was not good at all. Looking at you, it gave me a different impression. I assured you that it would be okay and that you would not need to decide right away. Couple days or so later, the palliative nurse came back and revisited the idea of getting referred to the GNH palliative unit. I advised you that it would be okay for us to try the palliative unit and that nothing bad would happen if we do so. And then he agreed. Referral was made on a Friday, and we expected for the process to take place in several days.

But Tuesday morning, March 17th, I received a call from your nursing unit that we got a room at the GNH palliative unit. I was shocked. I told the nurse that I would make my way to the hospital to fix your things. You sent me a text message as well telling me that we would be transferred today. I did not expect it to be this fast but hey! Aren't we lucky? You arrived there first with the EMS crew. I drove over and came to see you right away. You were now settled on your bed. A new space for us. A private room for us!! Alas! We got a private room, a quiet private room. Nurses after nurses, doctors after doctors. They made us feel at home. I knew from there that we were in good hands.

PLEASE BE PATIENT WITH ME. I KNOW I TALK A LOT, BUT BEAR WITH ME. I MISS TALKING TO YOU! I WANT TO TELL YOU MORE ABOUT OUR JOURNEY!! I WILL TRY TO FINISH THIS SOON.

There was this time that I had the chance of talking with the chaplain. I remembered we were sitting in the hallway outside of our room. He let me narrate what happened to us. Then I told him your birthday was coming up, and one thing I can't forget was when I told him "I do not know if this will be your last birthday with us" and that really made me cry. Even while writing this letter, my eyes teared up. He doesn't know how to respond to what he just heard. I don't expect him to respond though. I continued speaking and told him that God will lead us on our journey together. If this birthday would be your last with me here in the physical world then I would rejoice that God still gave us that chance to celebrate your life together. I remember telling a lot of people that I would not be egocentric when it comes to your quality of life. I would in a heartbeat let you go freely rather than see you suffering and prolonging your life for the selfish reason of I wanted to be with you. You would not have any quality of life left. I would be more than glad that you will be spending your eternal life with God free of pain and suffering. I would instantly choose to long for you for the rest of my life rather than see you suffer from your cancer. And know that I am still longing for you and will be longing for you every single day of my life.

March 22nd, Sunday, it's your birthday!! I am rejoicing and thanking God for your life, for this chance to spend it with me -- with just the two of us. This was a very, very intimate birthday with only the two of us, due to Covid restrictions. You looked like your normal self over this weekend. You could talk and converse with other people, even make jokes. And then, I handed this paper to you and asked me what it was. I told you to open it. You were not expecting what was written there. It said HAPPY BIRTHDAY PAPA! LOVE JANELLA. This made you burst out into tears!! It hurt me! It pinched my gut and my heart!! As I looked at your face, it was passively telling me that this could be your last birthday on Earth. But hey!! There we were! FIGHTING!! Taking one day at a time! Cherishing those moments that we got to be with each other. Looking back, do you remember asking me to lay down beside you? And I answered I can't because the bed was small and you would be uncomfortable. You responded no, it would be okay. That made my heart skip a beat and got flattered!!

After an hour or so, your normal self slowly returned to your sleepy self due to the medications that you were given. Medications to ease your pain, to ease your nausea and vomiting. It made you sleepy all the time though. But you know what, if that was okay with you then it was more than okay with me. I don't want to see you suffering in pain and knew that I cannot take that away from you. I took care of you the best I could! I was your shoulder to lean on, your feet to walk with, your hands to hold you safe and tight!! I would only hope that you still remember those.

March 23rd Monday, your brother and ate Rose went to the hospital to stay with you while I was at home. They were telling me how you were really wanting to talk back to them but you really can't speak as much. They were so happy seeing you like that! I came back to the hospital and then they left. The usual day... until approximately 1 in the morning of Tuesday March 24th. You started vomiting, which was typical at this point however it was fresh blood. I called the nurses and administered medications to help. And they said they would try to reach our doctor. An hour passed, you vomited again. And again! And again! This happened multiple times and I got so worried. In my mind, could this be your body

telling me that it can't fight anymore?? You even asked me what was happening, but I cannot tell you exactly what it was. I responded that it could be because of your cancer. And you took my answer contentedly.

Around 9:30ish Tuesday morning, our doctor came. She wanted to talk to me about what was going on. We went outside to her office and chatted. She asked me if I wanted her honest opinion of what was going on. I said yes! Blurt it out! She told me frankly that you were dying! This was very hard to hear but you know what, I was not sure where it came from but the courage inside of me told me that, if it's God's will to take you home I would not stop it in any way. I cried, yes! But there was this peace inside me, radiating within me. I know that was because of God's grace. I would not be able to do what I have done and continue doing what I need to do without Him. Our doctor even commended me for being so strong. For me, for our family and most especially for you!! I would not have done this if not for you Huga! Our doctor gave me a few minutes of silence. My mind being how crazy it was, March 25th popped up out of nowhere for no reason at all. Then she asked me if I could tell the family about it. I told her that I would be okay with my family but not yours. I would not want them to feel that I was giving up on you because I did not! I did not stop fighting for you! The doctor then suggested scheduling a video call with the family since they were not allowed at the hospital. Tuesday afternoon, the video call commenced and I told the family that the doctor wanted to give an update on your condition. And there she was, the calm doctor she is. She talked to them to the level of understanding that they could have in regards to what was happening. Then the family and our closest friends were given the chance to see you for what could be the last time. A lot of them came and you knew all of them!! I could not even wish for more that night. I saw how much love was being poured out to our family. I saw how much they loved you. I saw how much impact you have left in them.

While most of our family and friends were waiting outside, I saw your brother talking with your cousins. I asked if I could butt in and explain to them what happened. Because if there would be a person to answer any questions, that would be me. To avoid any confusion, I chose to talk to them. After talking to them, I sneaked back to our room. I wanted to be there with you while our family and friends were going in one after the other. Between the visitors, the priest came and prayed for you, for us. Do you recollect uttering "am I dying? Why is there a priest?" and I quickly said no! I then whispered to you that the priest was here to bless you because it was your birthday. Until the end, I would protect you as much as I could. I would choose to suffer over and over again instead of seeing my loved ones suffering. And as the visitors were coming into the room, you were wondering why? I told you that they were visiting because it was your birthday and this was the only time they let us have visitors. You went with it. You were even so happy to see them, to talk to them even though it was very hard for you. My heart was so full seeing those people and exerting so much effort to see you. And what surprised me, you recognized all of them.

March 25th Wednesday, our day was going as usual. Our doctor pulled me aside and talked to me about palliative sedation. She explained to me what it was and what it was for. I agreed to her adding that if this would be the best for you, I would do it! She talked to me about this because you gave me the authority to decide on your behalf. And then again, I asked her if she could tell your family about it and explain it to them. And she did one more time! How thankful I was of her!!

Around 4:30 in the afternoon, we were told that the palliative sedation would begin. I was preparing myself. I don't know what for. I don't know what to expect. You knew something was going on and you were trying to say something. I whispered to your ear, I reassured you that everything would be fine. That you would just sleep better to not feel any pain that was caused by your cancer. The nurse placed the butterfly on your right chest and started administering the medication. Increasing the dose every half hour or so until you reached that point of comfortability. Did you hear me whispering to your ear that it was okay to let go? Did you hear me telling you that I love you? That Janella would be taken care of? That I would be okay even after you left? That everything would fall into its rightful place in their rightful time? That God will sustain us? That God needed you the most? That God loved you the most? Did you hear me say that I will let you go freely rather than seeing you suffering and holding on to your dear life? I even told you that if you cannot fight anymore, it was okay for you to let go and you do not have to worry about us. Because I know that you knew that we could get through this. That you would still be with us in a different way. As time passed by, your breathing changed. I called the nurse and reassured us that it was normal. At 8:30 pm, I facetedimed Janella and asked her to say goodnight to you. I don't know, but I felt that it could be the last time. And IT WAS!! I was happy I called her at that time and gave her the chance to say good night and I love you papa. After talking to Janella, we were trying to get a hold of Nicole. But for some odd reason, it was not connecting at all. You heard that and knew that we were trying to call her. I realized that it could be your way of protecting her, not to see you took your last breath.

I was sitting at your bedside, holding your hands. I looked at you and noticed you were not breathing. I put my hands on your chest and there was no more heartbeat. I called the nurse and she came instantly. I told her you have no more heartbeat. She looked at you and told me that you were going soon. I turned my head towards you and there you took your very last breath. At exactly 8:50 pm, God called you home!! You took your last breath with me beside you, holding your hands. And I was so grateful for that! Your face was so peaceful and that radiated towards me as well. I know deep in my heart that I have done everything for you. That we fought until the end. Know how much I missed you! I miss having you by my side. I miss your text messages and your calls, your facetime calls. I miss us!! Looking back, I even told you to fly high! That you were free! Free from all the pain and suffering! I continued by saying we didn't actually lose the battle. WE WON!!!! We won because I know that you were now with our Savior!! And that peace radiated within me and through me all over again! Thinking about it I didn't know how I did it, how I handled everything. But like I said, this would not happen without God's grace and guidance. You have lived a good life! You served your purpose here on Earth Huga!!

**I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT, I FINISHED MY COURSE,  
AND I KEPT MY FAITH.**

**Jemiver Edgard Cabalagnan**

3.22.1988 - 3.25.2020