

Footprints

by Steve Ramirez

From time to time, through out the moments in time that we call a lifespan, I have paused to look back, and in doing so have noticed my own footprints. Each time, my footprints meander from some time and place in the past, and they always eventually lead to me- just standing there; looking back, looking down. When I was smaller my footprints were also smaller, but they were still mine and they still always led to me. I have been in many respects, a very fortunate traveler. I have followed my footprints across sandy beaches, and up rocky mountains, and have even left them floating, invisible over a coral reef. My footprints have followed me across the red African soil, the vineyards of Tuscany, and through the Texas Hill Country. When I walk along the sidewalks of my tiny Texas town, my footprints are hard to see as they go to my favorite coffee shop, but they are there nonetheless.

Sometimes, when I take the time to think about when my footprints will no longer follow me, I think about my passing from this lifetime to another. When that time comes, I know the sea will rise and take my footprints from the sandy beach, and the wind will rise and take my footprints from the red African dust. I know that no one will think to look for my footprints out side my favorite coffee shop, and the ones left along the coral reef will be sleeping with the fishes. I ask myself, "When my footprints no longer follow me, am I then gone, empty, worthless, hopeless, alone, finished, over, and if I am, did any of my wanderings amount to anything?" Did I ever really matter?

Sometimes, when I think of how a time will come when my footprints will no longer follow me, - I realize that it really doesn't matter and that my wanderings really do matter. You see, I know why when that time comes; my footprints will no longer follow me. It is because, when that time comes, my footprints will be following someone else. They will follow my child, when she is no longer a child, and when she needs to feel less alone in this world. They will follow a dear friend, who in hard times will wonder, "What would he say, if we could talk over coffee, or walk in the park?" When that time comes, my footprints won't belong to me anymore. When that time comes, my footprints will belong to anyone who I ever loved. What a wonderful trail for any one man to leave behind. X

