

“The Green Blanket”
By Michelle Golland

I am lying on our sofa covered in the soft green blanket that had already witnessed a miraculous healing. It was this green blanket that had laid on top of my husband Michael's body while he lay motionless in a coma after having been struck by a car while taking a walk just 11 months before. It was this green blanket I had decided would become our family "healing" blanket after he woke up after five long days in the Intensive Care Unit. I knew we needed another miracle but wondered if one family could be granted two miracles within the same year. It seemed like a bit much to ask in the karmic scheme of life.

How is it I find myself here waiting, waiting for a Rabbi I had never really met? A meeting I did not want to have or choose to have but one none the less am compelled to have. I knew it was she who I would call when I first heard the news. I knew because of her beautiful milky skin and wide kind smile. I knew because she was a woman. I knew because she was a mother.

I can see our Sukkan through the den window as I wind the green fringe of the blanket between my fingers. It reminds me of tzit tzit. Having a 2 year old little boy and one on the way had left me no energy to dismantle our three sided house, even if it is flimsy. Any guilt for not completing the menial tasks of motherhood has been wiped clean away due to the task which I must now complete.

As I wait to leave a message for the Rabbi, I am startled to hear a live voice, “This is Rabbi Missegehie” she says in her New York accent which is not as delicate as her appearance. I say, “Hi, my name is Michelle” that is all I could get out before I begin to cry. I press my lips together hard, to try to compose myself. After taking a deep breath, I continue awkwardly, “We haven’t met, we’re new members but I need your help. I’m 5 months pregnant and I just found out I need to terminate this pregnancy, I mean our baby.” I discover there is no easy or correct way to say you must end the life of your child. Again, I cry. Her simple, gentle reply, “Can I come over in about an hour?”

She is as compelled to meet me as I to meet her. We are now connected two mothers in one tragedy. As she sits on the end of our sofa, her eyes wet from her own tears. She listens as I explain the rare genetic abnormality that my husband and I passed onto our son which makes his survival to 40 weeks almost impossible and any brief life that may come to him would be difficult, painful and ultimately end in his death.

I just want to mother him the best I can from this point until he dies I explain. The need to have a final resting place for our son's small body was intense and primal for Michael and me. His brief life may have only been lived inside of me but in our hearts we had seen him grow up to be an old man. In our dreams he and Asher were inseparable brothers doing mischievous things. In our dreams he had a bris, a bar mitzvah and a wedding. These dreams were not to be.

One dream would come true. He would have the name he was to be given when he was born. He is our son Ozzie, he will always be our second child. In Hebrew Oz means courage and strength.

Our last night all together I woke up early, right before the sunrise. The air was thick and damp. The green blanket had been tucked into my bag waiting by the door to

accompany me and Michael on the journey to the hospital. With Michael peacefully asleep and Asher snuggled up against his back in our bed. I gently slid in next to Asher. With Ozzie still Safe inside of me. I knew this would be our last moment all together as a family.

 Holding my soft round belly I whispered to my son “Oz I’m so sorry for what is going to happen today. Don’t be scared I will be with you.” I blessed him on his journey and thanked him for coming to me and giving me his gift, the gift of courage and strength when you think you have none. I then gently placed the green blanket over us and wept.