

Unremembered Loss

For all the news and information from the world of Rathrae, and for the story Unremembered Loss

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The new year has started and with it some big changes. On January 10th I was called into an all-hands meeting at work where I was told that our plant is going to be closed as of April 6th. One might think that means that I would be able to get more writing done - no more over time and the ability to leave the concerns of work at work since it all really doesn't matter any more. Alas, such is not the case.

The first couple of days were consumed with the typical shock, followed by disbelief. The next two days I distracted myself by holding a gathering at my house where we could all talk and make some new contacts to help with our soon to be paramount job searches. Saturday was spent recovering from the gathering and cleaning up. On Sunday it was time to do an inventory of our finances and start thinking about what to do next. That left no time for writing.

Of course I get to spend some time this next week writing my resume - but that's suppose to be non-fiction. More to the point, during the next few weeks I have to figure what is I want to do.

I would love to be able to write full time, but I haven't figured out how to make money doing it yet. I saw a job posting this week asking for a person to write blog posts. It would be three to four paragraph posts on Mac technical issues and news - with two or three posts a day. The pay? \$0.70 per post. The way I write that would be \$2.00 per hour - not quite what I need to pay the mortgage. I could

work on my own blog and get lots of people to visit and click on ads there. But again, I get two or three visits a week right now, and no ad clicks (mostly because I don't have any ads to click on) which would generate even less than the \$0.70 per post.

I could finish my novel. If I took the next five months to work on it full time I could have it ready to publish. Assuming I picked the right publisher, the fastest I would see any money would probably be six months. That first money would be an advance (which first time writers rarely get) which would probably be in the \$5,000 range. That might hold me for another two months, after six months of no pay. The next money would be the royalties (which don't start until after the advance is earned) which might start a year later, but more likely two years. During that time I would have of course done two things - written two or three more books and starved to death.

I've been thinking about trying my hand at iOS programming (iPhone, iPod, iPad). I've been teaching myself the details for the last three years. If I took the next five months and focused on becoming proficient at it, I could do it for a living. There are four ways I could apply those skills. 1) Become a freelance programmer and find jobs all over the world writing programs for lots of different people. 2) Join a company that does basically the same thing, but as a group of programmers. 3) Find a larger company and work for them full time - writing applications for either internal use or for sale to

the public. 4) Write some applications myself and sell them in the App store.

All four approaches have advantages, disadvantages, and risks. 1 & 4 are working for myself and means I have to struggle each week to find the next weeks work, but they have the highest potential for income. 1, 2, & 3 are working for someone else - making the application that they want written, but they are taking the risk that it is the right application. 3 looks like a growth market right now. 4 is looking harder because there are so many application already written. With all of them there is a fear that I'm not up to the task.

I can of course try to get another job in the electronics industry, but my heart isn't there. It brings in a paycheck and there is a good chance that is where I'll end up because of my responsibility to my wife and kids.

So the next few weeks will see a dip in my writing as I figure out where I want to end up. Any thoughts or conversation you would like to have with me would be welcomed with open arms. Your prayers are also welcomed, no desired. I need to just keep reminding myself of the truth that I have learned over the last three years.

It is the journey that matters. While we need to keep our eyes fixed on a goal that is far off, life is lived today and the importance of life is the impact I have on others right now.

Douglas G Clarke