



## Allan Wilson

With a Master of Education degree from The University of Lethbridge, teacher and writer, Allan Wilson, lives, works, and studied in Lethbridge, Alberta. He has taught all ages—from kindergarten to university students; he has worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), drove truck, forklift, and an armoured car, was a Customs Officer, salesman, and then a manager and president of a Toronto business. Published in *The United Church Observer* (July/August 2000), *Reader's Digest*, and in *The Canadian Medical Association Journal* ("[The continent of cancer](#)", Can. Med. Assoc. J., Dec 2000; 163: 1620 - 1621), as an author, Allan has read from his writing on the CBC radio, "This Morning" show.

### Early History:

I was born in 1948 in Calgary, the second of a family of five children and two parents. It was a large, noisy and active family. I lived through the Cold War scares of the fifties, the assassination of President Kennedy, the popularity of The Beatles, adult concern over boys with long hair, Bob Dylan, civil rights, art, literature and anti-Viet Nam war protests. I travelled alone in Europe, wrote, explored music and Marathon running and performed a wide variety of jobs and careers until I settled on teaching. In March of 1998, my son, Josh was diagnosed with bone cancer; on July 14, 1999, the cancer was diagnosed as terminal; and on Jan. 13, 2000, Josh died. I am left with his memories, and his story. I am determined that others should know his story, and know of his courage and I continue to direct my grief towards telling his story to others.

**Age You Began Writing:** I began to write seriously in Mount Royal Junior College when I took journalism. It sharpened my editorial skills. I later developed that into the crisis caused by my sensationalistic provocations—the deeper I got in, the more provocative and cagey my writing became. A novel that I wrote in the seventies was in pursuit of poetic fiction, modelled after James Joyce. Parts of that manuscript succeeded.

**My Writing:** In the first year after Josh died, I was sustained by some successes with my writing: an article in the United Church magazine, *the Observer*; the acquisition of a Hollywood agent who thought the story could become a film; a second article, "the Continent of Cancer" published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, and that same article read by me on the CBC national radio network.

A customized reprint of *the Observer* article was published by the *Reader's Digest* in October 2002—a gratifying experience. They gave it a new title, "Joshua's Gifts", printed it with an excellent photo. The conversion of *Walking Upright Through Fire* into a stage play is promising. I have held readings in Lethbridge and Calgary, and received requests from twenty-six churches for the script so they could consider putting on a reading.

Through my work, I feel that part of Joshua's spirit is still with my wife, Sandy and I.

**Awards and Recognitions:** Alberta Arts Foundation Writer's Grant for *Walking Upright Through Fire*.

**Future Plans:** I am working on publicity for the play version of *Walking Upright Through Fire*. When that is put aside I will start a novel version of my comedy screenplay, *Swearing and Explosions*.

### SUMMARY OF BLESSINGS Bless Them

Bless them;  
bless the goofy ones;  
bless the sharp ones.  
Bless the girls hiding behind their fashions;  
bless the boys hiding their eyes under the hats.

Bless the ones struggling to write;  
bless the ones who come to every class.  
Bless the ones who skip and get caught;  
bless the ones fighting off temptation.

Bless the ones struggling at home;  
bless the few who drop out.  
Bless the quiet ones.  
Bless the ones just beginning to understand  
the potential of their lives;  
bless the ones just beginning to feel  
the dazzling magic of love relationships.

Bless the athletes and the artists.  
Bless the dancers, the drama kids  
and the volunteers.  
Bless the ones who have to work  
twenty-five hours a week to help their families.  
Bless the thinkers in the back of the room.  
Bless the ones who have seen terrible things  
in their homes and on the streets.  
Bless everyone and hope they all have  
some enchanting electric moments  
with friends or music or class work or sports,  
moments they can remember forever,  
moments where they begin to sense,  
in the middle of this wonderful and dangerous life,  
the natural truth in the exploration  
for their standards of excellence.