

I REMEMBER . . . FALLING DOWN A LONG, LONG MOUNTAIN!

I remember the sharp pain of the wind hitting my body as the chair lift moved into its final ascent up the mountain.

I remember to relax; letting the wind go through me so won't hurt so much; the unbearable chill loses its grip on me as the light snow falls at an angle on my face.

Skiing is like a lover that gets under your skin, haunting you; calling you like a siren.

I'm snuggled between My cousin Steve - an expert skier — and my husband Bill — who does not share the love of this siren as Steve and I do. Steve gets us into difficult runs, just to test me. I love it.

I remember the skis gliding as I release myself from the slick seat and head for the edge of the mountain. A few long turns after leaving the top of the mountain, I catch an edge, fall and roll downhill. With the mountain's steep angle, and the wetness of the once crisp snow, stopping is not an option.

Steve throws himself in front of me. Holding onto each other, we roll down the mountain together. As we gain speed, hats, skis, scarfs, even poles come flying out of this human ball.

I remember Steve's beard is getting whiter and whiter — crusted with more snow each roll of our descent. An image enters my mind as we turn feet over heads:

It's "Lost Horizon," and Steve's aging with every rotation of our combined bodies. I watch for it — as we roll again, he gets older. I start to laugh.

Over half-way down the run, we manage to dig our boots in significantly enough so our bodies slide to a stop.

I remember looking up the mountain as my husband Bill is picking up the clothes and skis we've littered along the white carpet during our descent.

He looks at us . . . and just shakes his head.

I remember that look well.