

*Tales from the Other Side is set in seven parts. The first five are tales that the author witnessed, which are astonishing because they defy natural law and scientific explanation. The sixth part is a poem describing the dialogue between people stargazing and alien travelers. The seventh part is comprised on two allegorical, inspiring stories.*

## **Tales from the Other Side**

By Paul Corson

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# Tales from the Other Side

Paul Corson

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## **Part One: An Amazing Tale**

The Other Side and the universal material level are connected by a slim, magical thread.

### Franklin Gallo, the Cosmic Traveler

It was a memorable day for me—considering the unprecedented scale of the events that followed.

A gentleman in his early 30s walked into my pharmacy. I went from the lab to the counter to meet him. He was handsome with finely chiseled features and a light-olive complexion. I made eye contact with him. After a long, hesitating second, he told me that he had sickle-cell anemia and required high doses of a narcotic medication.

“I was diagnosed when I was about four,” he said. “Been taking pain meds ever since. Now I take a high dose, as you can see.” He handed me his prescription, which would last him seven days. “I’ll need this every week. Can I count on you to stock this medication for me?”

I said I would. His earnestness and even disposition were evident. I was at ease with him, which encouraged conversation. He said his name was Franklin Gallo, and he was in a PhD program at Villanova, a highly-rated, small university. The campus was just a short hop from Philadelphia and was situated in the middle of the Main Line, an extended suburb that included a number of small towns. He said that he was in Villanova’s philosophy program. One of my questions about his philosophic views led to another, and we talked on and on.

I left the store and walked with Franklin to his car parked a short distance away. I didn’t want to break away from the conversation. It was fulfilling on many levels and had a delicious quality to it as if I were dining at a fine restaurant.

I looked forward to seeing Franklin at the pharmacy the following week. When he arrived, we greeted each other enthusiastically. From that time on, we became fast and true friends.

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But when he was in his early 20s, new, more efficient pain meds had become available. These meds were a blessing, not only because they controlled the pain but also didn't impair his ability to focus. From that time on, he blossomed academically. He enrolled in college, received his bachelor's degree and master's in theology. Then, he decided to switch his course of study to philosophy.

Franklin was a superior student. He was chosen by the chairman of the department to be an instructor, which qualified him to teach undergraduate classes and those in the master's program. One day, he invited the chair of the philosophy department along with a senior faculty member to his home for dinner, an occasion that I attended with Helene, my fiancée. It was a stimulating evening, and the wine flowed freely.

Often during the week, Franklin and I talked, sometimes until early in the morning, debating ethics, original cause, and other like matters.

When I married Helene, Franklin was my best man. Helene and I spent a lot of time with Franklin and his wife, Evelina, and their two sons, Angelo and Joseph.

During the next few years, Franklin's condition gradually worsened. His sickle-shaped red blood cells destroyed delicate tissues in his body, as the cells whirled around in his veins and arteries like tiny blades. This was especially damaging to his lungs. Because of this damage, sometimes his lungs could not supply enough oxygen to his body, and he would suffer respiratory spasms, making him gasp for breath. When this happened, Evelina would stand in front of Franklin. Face to face, she would lock her eyes onto his. "Frank," she would plead, "Breathe! Take a breath, Frank. Good! Now take another and another."

They got through those crises by their determined efforts. Sometimes the crisis would leave him so weak that he would have to be taken to the hospital for a blood transfusion, which rejuvenated him.

One afternoon, Evelina called me at the drugstore and said that Franklin had been admitted to Pennsylvania Hospital. "He had a setback two days ago," she said, "but he's doing well. He should be discharged real soon."

"I'll see him today after work," I told her.

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But the second I stood in the doorway, he popped upright. “Paul,” he said enthusiastically. “I’m surprised to see you.”

I was surprised that he was so alert after being awakened from a deep sleep. “Evelina told me you were in the hospital,” I said. “So I thought I’d just drop in. I only wanted to wish you well. You must be tired. I’m about to leave.”

“No, no,” he said. “Stay. Let’s talk.”

Our conversation that evening was more personal than any that had preceded it, which I noted at the time. I spoke admirably about his thirst for knowledge and about how he patiently took the time to describe concepts that challenged me intellectually.

After we spoke for a while, I told Franklin that I loved him. He said he loved me too. We then kissed on the lips, which was customary among the men in his family. The kiss on the lips and speaking about our love for each other was a first for us. For some reason, I was driven to seek this closure.

Soon after returning home that night, I heard Helene cry out from upstairs in the bedroom. My first thought was that she must have seen a mouse. I ran to the rescue. When I entered the room, she looked at me oddly and asked if I had just been in the room.

“No,” I said, “I was downstairs. Didn’t you hear me charging up the stairs?”

Helene started to tremble. “A minute ago, when I was here in the room, I sensed a presence behind me. I thought it had to be you planning to surprise me, although I know that’s what you’d do. Yet strangely, it didn’t feel as if it was you behind me—it felt like it was Franklin. In the same second, Franklin’s voice said your name. *Paul*. I turned around. There was no one in the room! And I let out a cry.”

We spoke about this on and off for the rest of the night. We both believed that Franklin’s spirit had been in the room, but we could not make any further sense of this. I had already told Helene that I had visited Franklin and that he was being discharged the next day.

The next morning, the phone rang. I picked it up. Franklin's oldest son, Angelo, said in a hollow, choking voice that his father had died the previous night about an hour after I left the hospital.

When I conveyed this to Helene, she looked at me in disbelief. We were both crying. "My God," I stammered, "Franklin chose to be in our home when he was passing from this level. He wanted to communicate with both of us!"

The day after Franklin passed; we visited his family and had dinner together. A close-knit, loving family, they were in deep sorrow.

Evelina took us back to the night when Franklin left. "When I got to the hospital, Franklin was looking forward to leaving. He was finishing an essay he'd been working on. We talked some, and a few minutes later, he started having trouble breathing. He became frightened. I placed my hands on his face and went through the steps that were routine for us. But he didn't respond. He seemed to be failing. Franklin tried desperately to breathe and seemed about to pass out. I shouted, 'Breathe, breathe!' The next second, his gasping stopped. He broke eye contact and looked over my shoulder. He seemed transfixed. His eyes opened in wonder and astonishment—and then they closed. I screamed. Medical personnel rushed into the room and began attending to Franklin. I saw one grab him. Someone took me to a nearby station. The medical team worked on him for about a half hour, and then the murmuring in the room stopped. A doctor I had talked to earlier left the room and came over to me to tell me that they had done everything they could to bring him back, but they could not. Franklin had died."

In mourning, Evelina said that the most important thing would be knowing whether he had suffered or felt any pain when he was dying. "Angelo and Joseph feel the same way."

Evelina looked puzzled as she turned to me with troubled eyes. "Why did Franklin break eye contact with me and focus elsewhere in his last minute? It was as if he didn't want my help anymore."

I suggested that he may have seen the glory of heaven opening up to him. He could have seen the entrance leading into the light.

Evelina let out a deep breath and appeared consoled. "I'm sure that's what it was—the gateway to heaven."



She showed Helene and me two printed notebook pages. “This is a poem that Franklin wrote in which he describes his love for me.” In a hushed, quavering but resolute voice, Evelina the poem aloud. It had an epic quality as if it had been written for the ages.

Evelina explained how she came to retrieve the poem. “Last night, I was drawn into Franklin’s study. I don’t recall the last time I went in there. He was always concerned that I might be tempted to straighten out the papers that were strewn in some rough sort of order. So I made a point of not entering the room. And I certainly had no idea how to run his computer and printer. I didn’t even know how to turn them on. But last night, there I was in his study. I felt that Franklin was guiding me. In a dreamlike state, I turned on the computer along with the printer. I pressed a number of keys on the keyboard, which opened the file with the poem, and I saw a notation by Franklin that he’d been intending to give this poem to me. I pressed other keys and printed the poem. I was then guided to turn off the computer and the printer.”

Helene and I told the Gallo family of Franklin’s visit to our home the night he had passed on. My voice was cracking with emotion when I said that Franklin’s wish to reach us was granted by the higher power.

We visited the family several days later. Over dinner, Angelo, in a voice filled with wonder and awe, told us about a dream he’d had two nights earlier in which his father was present. “It was so real, it was as if he was there as a living person. My father appeared to me when I was sleeping, and he looked concerned as if he wanted to tell me something. I asked him directly, ‘Dad, did you feel any pain when you were dying? We all want to know.’ A smile came over his face, but he didn’t say anything. I repeated this several times, all the while looking imploringly into his eyes, but he did not speak. Why didn’t he respond to my question?” Angelo cried.

Somehow I knew the meaning of the dream. I said that Franklin had visited his eldest son because he was now the head of the family. Turning to Angelo, I told him, “Your father *did* understand your anguish about whether he died in pain.”

“Then tell me, why didn’t he answer my question?” Angelo wailed.

“He would have if he could. That was not how it was planned by the higher power. He loves you all very much. Your father was silent because what you’re trying to know won’t come from him but from someone else. It will happen,” I declared with the utmost conviction because I knew this in my heart and soul.

Less than a week later, I received a call from Evelina. She said she had something important to tell us.

Helene and I went to see Franklin's family the next night. They told us the story over dinner.

Joseph, one of the sweetest, dearest kids in the world, stood behind the armchair at the head of the table that was now unoccupied. He said he'd been busing tables in a restaurant several times a week to help out with expenses. A few days ago, on one of his shifts, he noticed a couple, a man and a woman, looking at him on and off throughout their meal. "They weren't in the section I was busing, and I didn't understand why they were watching me as if they knew me. I had never seen them before. I kept busy with my work, but a little later, they came over to where I was working."

The man, who was in his late 20s, said, "We hate to ask you this, but did anyone in your family die in Pennsylvania Hospital a few weeks ago? You bear a strong resemblance to that person."

"I said, 'Yes, it was my father, Franklin Gallo.'"

"We, my wife and I, are residents in the hospital, and we were in the room when your father died."

Joseph said that he'd asked, "Did he suffer at the end? They assured me that I did not need to worry. 'He had one of the most peaceful deaths we've ever seen,' they said. 'Your father was full of love and even appeared happy.'"

The family's anguish was over. I believe it was all orchestrated by Franklin from the Other Side. Franklin had directed and produced two films on his own, using talent from his neighborhood for the cast. In one of the scenes, Evelina appeared. She looked unrecognizably ethereal in the filtered lighting. Franklin had been a master. These talents did not leave him when he passed. He was still able to direct outcomes that fulfilled his vision.



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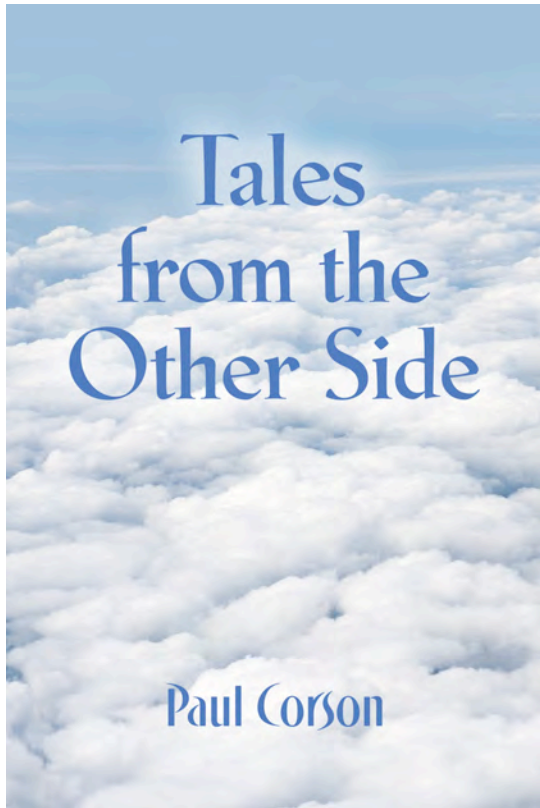
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