

**The Majesty of Your Loving:
A Couple's Journey through
Alzheimer's** by *Olivia Ames Hoblitzelle*.
*Foreword by Jon Kabat-Zinn. Cambridge,
Mass.: Green Mountain, 2008. 314
pages, paper, \$16.95.*

This beautiful yet practical book provides a spiritual dimension to a caregiver's problems in handling the ever-increasing challenge of Alzheimer's disease and other terminal situations.

Olivia and Harrison Hoblitzelle were both in midlife, active in teaching as well as faithful students and practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism. "Hob" held a Ph.D. in English literature and was a distinguished professor but (ironically, as it turned out) served in hospices as well. Olivia had been a teacher in the field of behavioral medicine and was (and is) a gifted writer and therapist. They had two grown children and several grandchildren and were world travelers at the onset of Hob's case of Alzheimer's.

Slowly and inexorably, Olivia is forced to watch her husband's mind deteriorate, but she decides to record not only his mental conditions but her own reactions of compassion, resentment, guilt, despair, and unfailing love. She finds comfort in turning to her family and friends, but in the end the most powerful source of strength comes from her years of spiritual training and the perspective and insights this yields.

In the meantime, Hob in his rare lucid moments attempts to describe objectively what it feels like to be transitioning from normal consciousness to another level of reality. It is almost as if he is taking psychiatric notes on the nature of Alzheimer's! The result is a deeply moving record of two heroic souls attempting to make a healing gift of love and compassion to all those many others who will come after them. This is Tibetan Buddhism put into practice: to offer up one's suffering for the benefit of others.

Each chapter is followed by practical solutions and "Seed Thoughts." A series of appendices include "Clear Light Meditation," "Caring for Loved Ones in Death," and "Topics for Discussion." There is also a helpful bibliography and Web site source.

If you know anyone caring for someone facing certain death, this book could be the best gift ever. It glows with inner light and practical wisdom and surely will become a contemporary classic.

—ALICE O. HOWELL

The reviewer is an author and astrologer based in western Massachusetts. Her works include The Web in the Sea; The Dove in the Stone; and The Heavens Declare: Astrological Ages and the Evolution of Consciousness, all published by Quest Books.