forms in which grief can manifest itself and implode one's life, especially when in the context of grieving someone who is still alive. Dr. Douglas Engleman's articulate and insightful expression of his family's experiences with his son, Doug, who suffered from Schizophrenia in *A Boy Broken,* challenges literal and conventional understandings of grief by presenting both psychological loss and physical death as parallels, yet distinct forms of mourning, each demanding its own kind of emotional survival, reluctant acceptance, the redefinition of love, and the attribution of meaning to pain. The book acknowledges two main periods of grief. The first being when Dr. Engleman initially came to the realization that his son was struggling with symptoms consistent with Schizophrenia, a pivotal point which exposed all of his own stigmas, fears, and shame associated with the mental illness. The second wave of grief was experienced once the more literal loss struck his family's lives, leaving a hole that can never quite be filled as well as the guilt from all the factors that he felt may have contributed to this extremely devastating outcome.

The author, Dr. Engleman, describes the transformation of his son's personality and behavior through the lens of his struggle with his illness. He describes how Doug suddenly began to display behaviors inconsistent with the sweet, promising child that Dr. Engleman remembered as he watched his son grow up. From the distant and irritable demeanor to the obvious lack of self-maintenance, it was apparent that after just a year in college at the Pitsburgh Art Institute he had returned home differently. This loss is described as associated with the relationship, personality, and the norms that were pre-established and maintained throughout the person's life. Dr. Engleman breaks down the lifestyle that the family had as Doug was growing up, the environment, their dynamics, their struggles, and their love. However, he also highlights the layers of anger and guilt he felt from the facts that he internalized as factors in his son's

Dough's childhood. I was angry with the fact that my family carried the genes that might have led to this. I was angry at our God, to who I had prayed so frequently and earnestly for the safety and well-being of my family. And I was angry at Doug for whatever substances he may have abused that contributed to his condition." Eventually, this anger and fear turned into acceptance and a drive to help his son the best he can. This acceptance marks the acknowledgement of the necessary shift that was made in their relationship and the loss of their old one. With loss, comes a sense of grief, says Dr. Engleman, and he is referring to the grief of losing his son not to death, but to an illness that distorted the boy he knew. It is a form of mourning without the harsh closure of death called ambiguous grief.

Ambiguous grief was a key component in their journey, and it both scared and drove Douglas Engleman to learn as much as he could to help his son progress past his Schizophrenia. Although Doug's body remained present for six years after he was diagnoses, the emotional and relational connection between father and son fractured and required immense efforts on both sides to re-establish and revise the dynamic. For Engleman, he felt a complex combination of hope and despair with this understanding. He learned as much as he could, starting from the first book he found on how to approach this situation titled "Surviving Schizophrenia: A Family Manual" by E. Fuller Torrey. Dr. Engelman's pain lies not only in Doug's deterioration but in the helplessness that comes from watching it unfold, powerless to intervene. What makes this first loss so complex and emotionally straining is the duality of Engleman's roles in this situation as a father and a trained psychiatrist. The knowledge and capacity for knowledge that shoud serve as a tool in helping him understand his son's behavior instead deepens his anguish. His professional outlook craves a clear explanation and plan of solution but as a father, he expresses to readers how difficult it is to overcome the emotional aspects of the situation. When someone you love

is forced to grieve without the finality that death provides, to live with a son who is present in body but unreachable in essence.

In contrast to ambiguous grief, true loss of a loved one feels much less invisible, much more "valid" to feel in a sense. Because Dr. Engleman has had to unfortunately experience two of the most agonizing things a parent can go through, he understands the parallels as well as the dualism between loss and death. He mentions how "Often, our experience of loss and grief is not recognized or validated by society." He goes on to say how the loss of a person's identity and projected life is not perceived nor empathized by society as it would be for the death of a person or child. I agree with this statement very strongly. I think the stigmas and shame we associate with mental illness from within and outside of the situation personally all negatively affect the resources available to survivors or those struggling with mental health. Therefore, as Engleman addresses, the loss of a child to mental illness is invalidated in many ways and undermined in terms of the damage and struggle it can cause not only the person, but the entire family who is trying to help support their loved one, especially when in comparison to death. In a really tragic manner, I interpreted Dr. Douglas Engleman's recount of his raw emotions at this point of loss to reflect a sense of closure. This closure obviously does not take away from the gut-wrenching pain and sorrow of losing a child; nothing could. However, I do find beauty in forcing yourself to relieve the sadness and pain by writing about it in hopes of healing and helping others who may be able to resonate with the experiences, mistakes, and advice in this book, which is exactly the reason Dr. Engleman wrote it.

Through this final, devastating loss of his son, I believe Dr. Engleman comes to recognize that grief is not something to be conquered but something that you live alongside. After years of struggling with Doug's illness and the limitations it caused, Dr. Engleman, by

He grieved the child he knew in so many periods and so many forms, with unwavering love through it all. When Doug's life was cut short by the accident, that suspended grief fell into the perfect mold of permanence. Although the pain in this is apparent, the finality may offer a version of cruel peace no longer wondering and hoping. Personally, I think this distinction between ongoing and final losses is what makes Engelman's story so human. The slow, ongoing kind of loss, like watching someone fade into mental illness, is harder for many to live with because it never resolves. It asks you to keep loving someone who may not be able to love themselves or you back in the same way. Final loss, for all its brutality, at least ends the waiting. There's pain, but also clarity. In Engelman's case, death did not erase his grief; it simply transformed it from a storm into a silence. That silence becomes the space where he finally begins to understand himself not just as a father or a doctor, but as a man learning how to live after love's hardest test.

In "A Boy Broken", Engelman's story is not simply about a father losing his son, twice, first to mental illness and then to death, but about what it means to keep living when love is no longer reciprocated in familiar ways. His journey forces the reader to confront the nature of loss as something that demands more than emotional endurance; it requires acceptance, surrender, and transformation. Engelman's strength lies not in his ability to overcome grief, but in his willingness to be changed by it, to let it redefine what connection and compassion mean. Both forms of loss test his humanity, but they also refine it. By sharing his most painful truths, Engelman gives language to a kind of love that persists through powerlessness. His reflections remind us that grief is not the opposite of love, but its final, most honest expression. In learning to carry both sorrow and gratitude at once, Engelman reveals that healing is not the return of what was lost, but the rediscovery of oneself in the aftermath.