He Continues To Make A Difference: The Story of Matthew Shepard

an anti-bullying presentation for high school, college, and adult audiences

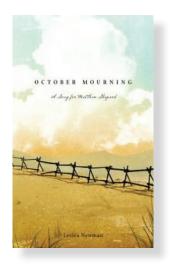
"The best assembly I've seen in 12 years of teaching" - Sara Barber-Just, Amherst MA

Shortly before midnight on October 6, 1998, Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old gay student attending the University of Wyoming, was kidnapped, robbed, brutally beaten, tied to a fence, and abandoned. Eighteen hours later, he was discovered by a biker, and taken to a hospital where he remained in a coma for five days until he died, with his family by his side.

Lesléa Newman arrived at the University of Wyoming on October 12, 1998 to give a keynote speech for Gay Awareness Week. She found a devastated campus and community. Her book, *October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard* tells the story of the impact of Matthew's murder in 68 poems that speak in the voices of the silent witnesses to this horrendous hate crime: the fence Matthew was tied to, the stars that watched over him, a deer that kept him company, his stolen shoes, the cold Wyoming wind.

In the presentation, "He Continues to Make a Difference", Lesléa Newman uses poetry, photographs, and creative visualization, to remind audience members that we all can—and must—make a difference to create a safe world for everyone.

Lesléa Newman is the author of sixty books for adults and children including the groundbreaking children's classic, *Heather Has Two Mommies* and the award-winning short story collection, *A Letter to Harvey Milk*. A gay activist for more than twenty years, she has received the James Baldwin Award for Cultural Achievement. the Continuing the Legacy of Stonewall Award, and the Hachamat Lev Award for "enduring commitment to justice and full inclusion for GLBT people in the Jewish community and beyond." A past poet laureate of Northampton, Massachusetts, Lesléa has received poetry fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Massachusetts Artists Fellowship Foundation.





If you would like information about bringing Lesléa Newman to your community, please contact her at leslea@lesleakids.com or 413-552-3865.

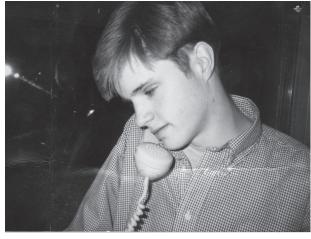


Photo courtesy of the Matthew Shepard Foundation

The Fence

I held him all night long He was heavy as a broken heart Tears fell from his unblinking eyes He was dead weight yet he kept breathing

He was heavy as a broken heart His own heart wouldn't stop beating He was dead weight yet he kept breathing His face streaked with moonlight and blood

His own heart wouldn't stop beating The cold wind wouldn't stop blowing His face streaked with moonlight and blood I tightened my grip and held on

The cold wind wouldn't stop blowing We were out on the prairie alone I tightened my grip and held on I saw what was done to this child

We were out on the prairie alone Their truck was the last thing he saw I saw what was done to this child I cradled him just like a mother

Their truck was the last thing he saw Tears fell from his unblinking eyes I cradled him just like a mother I held him all night long

October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard. copyright © 2012 by Lesléa Newman.
Reproduced by permission of the publisher,
Candlewick Press, Somerville, MA