Resurrection: A True Story of Power and Forgiveness
By PA McDermott
Reviewed by Ginny Sparrow, Editor

A beautifully paced memoir of the loss of a woman's brother, Resurrection tells a story of suicide that has the "why" answered in spades.

While starting a teaching career in a small town outside of Sydney, a young man is accused of inappropriate behavior, including touching, by a group of girls he once angered by use of his authority. Before any investigation is begun, Mathew is suspended and takes his own life.

While "resurrecting" the case, and researching her family's mental health history, Mathew's sister, author PA McDermott, touches on all the contributors to her brother's fate. With 18 years of reflection, McDermott offers a healthy road map of grief; a how to for survivors. Her memoir tracks her brother's entire life while also cataloging the author's coping skills for dealing with grief, and even her own suicidal feelings.

Sparingly written, and with touching love and sympathy for her brother, his story is at once interesting without being sensationalized. Matthew’s suicide rocked a small community years ago, and his side of the accusations will never be heard. But letters from former parents and co-workers are found, and evidence that the girls were less than reliable surface. McDermott is honest in her evaluation of the situation, openly sharing her findings of facts that do hurt his case (he is warned that letting students drink alcohol at his apartment is less than wise). She also ponders all the other things in his life that led to his decision: a missing father, a failed relationship, a change of career from priesthood to educator.

A fine example of how the memoir can be healing for a family and community, Resurrection is how a survivor’s story should be told.