

I Thought of You Today

I thought of you with love today,
but that is nothing new.

I thought about you yesterday
and days before that too.

I think of you in silence,
I often speak your name.

All I have are memories
and your picture in a frame.

Your memory is my keepsake
with which I'll never part.

God has you in his keeping,
I have you in my heart.

-Author unknown

IN MEMORY OF



Austin Birely

2002 ~ 2026

AUSTIN'S STORY

Austin James Birely was a bundle of life from the moment he entered this world on December 4, 2002. Born to Donald Lee and Dezaræ Christine (Cooley) Birely in Montrose, Colorado, Austin was the firstborn of what would become a lively sibling group of nine. The family later relocated to Altus, Oklahoma for Donald's employment with Walmart, where the children attended Navajo School and continued building a home full of energy, laughter, and love.

A step beyond energetic, Austin was truly dynamic. His jovial approach to life earned him the title of class clown, a role he wore proudly. His smile was contagious, his friendships endless, and his imagination unstoppable. A natural prankster, Austin was known for spinning tall tales and elaborate tricks—so often, in fact, that when he actually fell out of a tree one day, his siblings didn't believe him. Though his antics frequently landed him in trouble, they never dimmed his cheerful spirit. Above all else, Austin loved his siblings beyond measure, finding joy simply in being together.

Street-smart and endlessly curious, Austin had a deep love for reading, especially true crime and anything related to science or biology. He was a gifted cook who enjoyed experimenting in the kitchen, and he found peace in fishing—eventually growing brave enough to bait his own hook and release his own catch. Whether learning, laughing, or lending a hand, Austin embraced life fully and left a lasting



impression on everyone who knew him. Austin passed from this life on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at the age of 23. His life reminds us that it is not the length of our days that matters most, but the light we leave behind. That light now shines in the hearts of his family, in the bonds between siblings he cherished so deeply, and in the countless lives touched by his kindness and humor. He was preceded in death by his grandpa, Don Birely Sr. Austin's spirit endures—forever young, forever loved, and forever a part of those who carry him with them—his parents, Donald and Dezaræ; siblings, Joshua, Landon, Megan, Averie, Kaylee, Emily, Savanna, and Ava; sister-in-law, Madison Birely; grandparents, John and Triestle Cooley and Debbie Birely; great-grandparents, Bob and Barbara Cowley; aunts and uncle, Krystal, Laurinda, and Morgan and Greg and Jessica; countless cousins and many friends.

Though his time on this earth was far too brief, Austin James Birely lived with a fullness that many never reach. He taught those around him how to laugh freely, love fiercely, and face each day with curiosity and courage.

CELEBRATING

Austin

MEMORIAL SERVICE

2:00 PM

Thursday, February 19, 2026
Kincannon Memorial Chapel
Altus, Oklahoma

OFFICIATING

Daniel Ingram
Michael Turner

A reader lives a thousand lives
before he dies. The man who
never reads lives only one.

~ George R.R. Martin
A Dance With Dragons