

BRIXEN BRESSANONE
**WATER LIGHT
FESTIVAL**

Nadja Rungger
**THE STARDUST
MEMORY PROJECT**

2026

Josef

*arriving at the top
and gazing, breathing
deeply and looking for words
which meet
time and again
everywhere*

Josef loved being out in nature. He would often bring a camera when he went hiking. When he started early, it would still be quiet on the summit and dark in the valley. The horizon would be endless, and Josef would look through the viewfinder with one eye and watch the sky change colours. Then it wouldn't be long until the first few sunbeams returned his gaze over the mountaintops.

Josef wrote his doctoral thesis in physics and taught physics and mathematics at a secondary school. His pupils liked and respected him, and he enjoyed sharing his passion and conducting experiments. He was tall, quiet. He did his work diligently, and he was well-organised, so he didn't even notice how packed his days were. Josef played the horn in an orchestra, and music was also how he met his wife; singing, specifically. The couple went to the U.S. for their honeymoon; later, a daughter was born. Josef was a skilled craftsman; he once made a rocking horse for her.

In the summer of 2018, he went to the top of Mont Blanc with some friends. Looking back, it was amazing that he mastered the tour so

easily, that he had been in such good shape. The diagnosis wouldn't come until later; the illness had already taken hold. The cancer was incurable, but they tried many things. Complaining won't change a thing, said Josef, and he spoke openly with his wife, his family. It was a quest for words, questions; an attempt to understand; it was a deep bond; and Josef's way of dealing with his illness was a great source of strength in all that. About a year later, Josef found peace at the age of thirty-six. It was Christmas, and his little girl said that the angels had taken him. She looks like him, and he wished for her to learn to love nature and the mountains.

They learned a lot from Josef; his presence, his aura is there in many things, and they feel great, comforting gratitude for that. When he was home, he would sometimes sit and look at the computer monitor for hours on end, browsing through his photographs, editing them. He enjoyed getting the best out of the photographs. He selected a few of them; they are hung in the rooms, for people to see.