

Words Of Comfort

A sunset over a body of water with a mountain silhouette in the background. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and water. The sky is filled with soft, orange and yellow clouds. The water in the foreground is dark, with the sun's reflection shimmering on its surface. The silhouette of a mountain range is visible in the background, with the sun setting behind it.

Introduction

The loss of a loved one is an experience that we all may have to cope with at some time in our lives. After the initial shock, and the numbness has worn off, we try to make sense of what has happened.

To do so, we turn to family and friends, neighbours, clergy, doctors and counsellors for guidance and support, but the ones that can usually give the most help are those that have been in the same situation, and have come through it.

During such a difficult time it can be helpful to have words of comfort. These writings are not original, but are collected from different sources and re-printed here for your use. They are intended to be read quietly as a help towards private devotions.



Londonderry Air

I would be true, for there are those who trust me.
I would be pure, for there are those who care.
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer.
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.
I would be a friend of all, the foe, the friendless.
I would be giving, and forget the gift.
I would be humble, for I know my weakness.
I would look up, and laugh and love and live.

Anon

The Sailing Ship

What is dying?
I am standing on the seashore.
A ship sails to the morning breeze and starts for the ocean.
She is an object and I stand watching her
Till at last she fades from the horizon,

And someone at my side says, "She is gone!" Gone where?
Gone from my sight, that is all;
She is just as large in the masts, hull and spars as she was when I saw her,
And just as able to bear her load of living freight to its destination.

The diminished size and total loss of sight is in me, not in her;
And just at the moment when someone at my side says, "She is gone",
There are others who are watching her coming,
And other voices take up a glad shout,
"There she comes" – and that is dying.

Bishop Charles Henry Brent

Goodbye my family, my life is past.
I loved you all to the very last,
Weep not for me, but courage take,
Love each other for my sake,
For those you love don't go away,
They walk beside you every day.

Frances Day

Time

Time is too slow for those who wait,
Too swift for those who fear,
Too long for those who grieve,
Too short for those who rejoice,
But for those who love,
Time is eternity.

Anon

When I have fears, as Keats had fears,
Of the moment I'll cease to be
I console myself with vanished years
Remembered laughter, remembered tears,
And the peace of the changing sea.

When I feel sad, as Keats felt sad
That my life is so nearly done
It gives me comfort to dwell upon
Remembered friends who are dead and gone
And the jokes we had and the fun

How happy they are I cannot know,
But happy I am who loved them so.

Noel Coward





In the Midst of Life

Death and I are only nodding acquaintances
We have not been formally introduced
But many times I have noticed
The final encounter
Here in this hospice,
I can truly say
That death has been met with dignity.
Who can divine the thoughts
Of a man in close confrontation?
I can only remember
One particular passing
When a man,
With sustained smile,
Pointed out what was for him
Evidently a great light.
Who knows what final revelations
Are received in the last hours?
Lord, grant me a star in the East
As well as a smouldering sunset.

Sidney Reeman

If I should die and leave you here awhile,
Be not like others, sore undone, who keep,
Long vigils by the silent dust, and weep.
For my sake – turn again to life and smile,
Nerving thy heart and trembling hand to do
Something to comfort other hearts than thine.
Complete those dear unfinished tasks of mine
And I, perchance, may therein comfort you.

A. Price Hughes

Do Not Be Afraid

Do not stand on my grave and weep.
I am not there, I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there; I did not die.

Author Unknown

A poem left for his parents by Stephen Cummins,
Who was killed by a terrorist bomb in 1989

Sonnet 71

No longer mourn for me when I am dead,
Then you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world with vilest worms to dwell:
Nay if you read this line, remember not,
The hand that writ it, for I love you so,
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forget,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O if (I say) you look upon this verse,
When I (perhaps) compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as poor name rehearse;
But let your love even with my life decay.
Lest the wise world should look in to your mone,
And mock you with me after I am gone.

William Shakespeare



Farewell My Friends

It was beautiful
As long as it lasted
The journey of my life.

I have no regrets
Whatever said
The pain I'll leave behind.
Those dear hearts
Who love and care...
And the strings pulling
At the heart and soul...

The strong arms
That held me up
When my own strength
Let me down.

At the turning of my life
I came across
Good friends,
Friends who stood by me
Even when time raced me by.

Farewell, farewell My friends
I smile and
Bid you goodbye.
No, shed no tears
For I need them not
All I need is your smile.

If you feel sad
Do think of me
For that's what I'll like
When you live in the hearts
Of those you love
Remember then
You never die.

Rabindranath Tagore

Death Stands Above Me

Death stands above me, whispering low
I know not what into my ear:
Of his strange language all I know
Is, there is not a word of fear.

Walter Savage Landor

I Don't Believe in Death

I don't believe in death
Who comes in silent stealth
He robs us only of a breath
Not of a lifetime's wealth

I don't believe in the tomb
Imprisons us in earth
It's but another loving womb
Preparing our new birth

I do believe in life
Empowered from above
Till freed from stress and worldly strife
We soar through realms above

I do believe that then
In joy that never ends
We'll meet all those we've loved, again
And celebrate our friends.

Pauline Webb



All is Well

Death is nothing at all
I have only slipped away into the next room
I am I and you are you
Whatever we were to each other
That we still are.

Call me by my old familiar name
Speak to me in the easy way which you always used
Put no difference into your tone.

Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow

Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was
Let it be spoken without effort
Without a trace of a shadow on it.

Life means all that it ever meant
It is the same as it ever was
There is absolutely unbroken continuity

Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight
I am but waiting for you
For an interval
Somewhere very near
Just around the corner
All is well.

Canon Henry Scott Holland

Footprints in the Sand

One night a man had a dream.
He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord,
Across the sky flashed scenes from his life.
For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand;
One belonged to him, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him,
He looked back at the footprints in the sand.
He noticed that many times along the path of his life
There was only one set of footprints.
He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest
And saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it
“Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you,
You’d walk with me all the way.
But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life
There is only one set of footprints.
I don’t understand why when I needed you the most
You would leave me.”

The Lord replied, “My precious precious child,
I love you and would never leave you.
During your times of trial and suffering,
When you see only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you.”

Anon





Song

When I am dead , my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree:
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet:
And if thou wilt, remember,
I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain:
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

Christina Georgina Rossetti

If I Should Go Before The Rest of You

If I should go before the rest of you,
Break not a flower nor inscribe a stone.
Nor when I'm gone speak in Sunday voice,
But be the usual selves that I have known.
Weep if you must,
Parting is hell,
But life goes on,
So sing as well.

Joyce Grenfell

Remember

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into a silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day be day
You tell me of your future that you'd plann'd-
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far that you should forget and smile
Than you should remember and be sad.

Christina Rossetti

I Have Seen Death Too Often

I have seen death too often to believe in death.
It is not an ending, but a withdrawal.
As one who finishes a long journey
Stills the motor, turns off the lights,
Steps from his car,
And walks up the path to the home that awaits him.

Anon



The Dead Are Not Under The Earth

The dead are not under the earth
They are in the tree that rustles
They are in the woods that groan
They are in the water that runs
They are in the water that sleeps
They are in the hut, they are in the crowd
The dead are not dead.
Those who are dead are never gone
They are in the breast of a woman
They are in the child that is wailing and in the fire that flames.
The dead are not under the earth
They are in the fire that is dying
They are in the grass that is weeping
They are in the whimpering rocks
They are in the forest, they are in the house
They are not dead.

When my ancestors talk about the Creator they say:
He is with us.....
We sleep with him. We hunt with him. We dance with him.

Francis Nnaggenda

She Walks in Beauty

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent

Lord Byron



Think of Me

I am not gone,
I never left,
Though through your tears,
You were bereft,
For I am waiting,
In the room next door,
Where one day we'll be together
Forever more.

Think of me in a flower,
Think of me in the rain,
Think of me when you hear,
The larks' sweet refrain,
Enjoy the warm sunlight,
I'll chase away the cold,
Cherish what we shared,
And your heart will never grow old.

For this is my love,
That I bestow on you,
To be always there,
In what ever you do,
Walking in the breeze,
Or watching the clouds sail by
Just remember me,
I never did die.

Andrew Gruberski

Indian Prayer

When I am dead
Cry for me a little
Think of me sometimes
But not too much.
Think of me now and again
As I was in life
At some moments it's pleasant to recall
But not for long.
Leave me in peace
And I shall leave you in peace
And while you live
Let your thoughts be with the living.

Traditional

He is Gone

You can shed tears that he is gone-
Or you can smile because he has lived.
You can close your eyes and pray that he will come back-
Or you can open your eyes and see what he has left.
Your heart can be empty because you can't see him-
Or you can be full of the love you shared.
You can turn your back on tomorrow and live for the past-
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.
You can remember him only that he is gone-
Or you can cherish his memory and let it live on.
You can cry and close your mind,
Be empty and turn your back-
Or you can do what he would want;
Smile, open your eyes, love and go on.





Death Be Not Proud

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not soe;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poore Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures bee,
Much pleasure – then from thee, much more must flow;
And soonest our best men with thee doe goe,
Rest of their bones and soules' deliverie.
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings and desperate men,
And dost with poyson, war and sickness dwell;
And poppie or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better than thy strake. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
And death shall be no more. Death, thou shalt die.

John Donne

Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night

Do not go gentle into that good night
Old age should burn and rave at the close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked not lightening they
Do not go gentle into that good night

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless me now with fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Dylan Thomas 1914-1953



Living Bouquets

When I quit this mortal shore
And mosey 'round this earth no more,
Do not weep and do not sob;
I may have found a better job.
Don't go and buy a large bouquet
For which you'll find it hard to pay,
Don't mope around and feel all blue;
I may be better off than you.

Don't tell the folks I was a Saint
Or any old thing that I ain't.
If you have jam like that to spread,
Please hand it out before I'm dead.
If you have roses bless your soul,
Just pin one in my buttonhole
While I'm alive and well today;
Don't wait until I'm gone away.

Mabeel Easley

But Not Forgotten

I think no matter where you stray,
That I shall go with you a way.
Though you may wander sweeter lands,
You will not forget my hands,
Nor yet the way I held my head
Nor the tremulous things I said.
You will still see me, small and white
And smiling, in the secret night,
And feel my arms about you when
The day comes fluttering back again.
I think, no matter where you be,
You'll hold me in your memory
And keep my image there without me,
By telling later loves about me.

Dorothy Parker





We hope that you have found these words comforting in your bereavement.
Should you require additional copies, please do not hesitate to ask.



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