

Five Poems to Help During the Grieving Process

Compiled by Michael Josephson

Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep

By Mary Frye

Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there, I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glint on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you wake in the morning hush,
I am the swift, uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circling flight.
I am the soft starlight at night.

Do not stand at my grave and weep.
I am not there, I do not sleep.
Do not stand at my grave and cry.
I am not there, I did not die!

When I'm Gone

By Mrs. Lyman Hancock

When I come to the end of my journey
And I travel my last weary mile,
Just forget if you can that I ever frowned
And remember only the smile

Forget unkind words I have spoken,
Remember some good I have done,
Forget that I ever had heartache,

And remember I've had loads of fun.

Forget that I've stumbled and blundered
And sometimes fell by the way.
Remember I have fought some hard battles
And won, ere the close of the day.

Then forget to grieve for my going.
I would not have you sad for a day.
But in summer just gather some flowers
And remember the place where I lay.

And come in the shade of evening
When the sun paints the sky in the west.
Stand for a few moments beside me
And remember only my best.

I Carry Your Heart With Me

By. E. E. Cummings

i carry your heart with me
(i carry it in my heart)
i am never without it

(anywhere i go you go, my dear; and whatever is done by only me is your doing, my darling)

I fear no fate
(for you are my fate, my sweet)
i want no world
(for beautiful you are my world, my true)
and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you
here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life; which grows
higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart
i carry your heart (i carry it in my heart)

For Good

From the play "Wicked"

(Glinda): I've heard it said
That people come into our lives for a reason
Bringing something we must learn.
And we are led
To those who help us most to grow
If we let them
And we help them in return.
Well, I don't know if I believe that's true,
But I know I'm who I am today
Because I knew you.

Like a comet pulled from orbit
As it passes a sun,
Like a stream that meets a boulder
Halfway through the wood,
Who can say if I've been changed for the better?
But because I knew you
I have been changed for good.

(Elphaba): It well may be
That we will never meet again
In this lifetime,
So let me say before we part
So much of me
Is made of what I learned from you.
You'll be with me
Like a handprint on my heart,
And now whatever way our stories end
I know you have rewritten mine
By being my friend.

Like a ship blown from its mooring
By a wind off the sea,
Like a seed dropped by a sky bird
In a distant wood,
Who can say if I've been changed for the better?
But because I knew you
I have been changed for good.

What Will Matter

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Ready or not, some day it will all come to an end.

There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours, or days.
All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten,
will pass to someone else.

Your wealth, fame, and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance.
It will not matter what you owned or what you were owed.
Your grudges, resentments, frustrations,
and jealousies will finally disappear.
So too, your hopes, ambitions, plans, and to-do lists will expire.
The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away.

It won't matter where you came from
or what side of the tracks you lived on at the end.
It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant.
Even your gender and skin color will be irrelevant.

So what will matter?
How will the value of your days be measured?

What will matter is not what you bought
but what you built, not what you got but what you gave.

What will matter is not your success
but your significance.

What will matter is not what you learned
but what you taught.

What will matter is every act of integrity,
compassion, courage, or sacrifice
that enriched, empowered, or encouraged others to emulate your example.

What will matter is not your competence
but your character.

What will matter is not how many people you knew
but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone.

What will matter is not your memories

but the memories that live in those who loved you.

What will matter is how long you will be remembered,
by whom, and for what.

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident.
It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice.

Choose to live a life that matters.