

## **DYING IN ORDER TO LIVE MORE FULLY**

**I believe in death.**

**I believe that it is part of life.**

**I believe that we are born to die, to die that we may live more fully;  
born to die a little each day to selfishness,  
to pretence, and to sin.**

**I believe that every time we pass from one stage of life to another,  
something in us dies and something new is born.**

**I believe we taste death in moments of loneliness and rejection,  
in moments of sorrow and disappointment,  
when we are afraid, lose courage and give up,  
when we see our dreams broken, and every time we say goodbye.**

**I believe, too, that we are dying before our time  
when we live in bitterness, in hatred, and in isolation.**

**I believe that each day  
we are creating our own death by the way we live.**

**To those who believe in Christ, death is a gateway,  
a gateway to eternal life.**

**Michelangelo Onicha**

## **A SIMPLE LIFE BUT CLOSE TO GOD**

(Taken from 'An Old Woman Remembers' by Peig Sayers.)

**It is a simple life we lived here,  
but nobody could say that it was comfortable.  
Often during life I have known God's holy help, because I was often  
in the grip of a sorrow from which I could not escape.  
When the need was greatest, God would lay his merciful eye on me  
and the clouds of sorrow would be gone without a trace.  
In their place would be a spiritual joy  
whose sweetness I cannot describe here.  
There are people who think this island is a lonely place,  
but the peace of the Lord is here.  
We helped each other, and lived in the shelter of each other.  
But now my life is spent, like a candle,  
and my hope is rising every day that I'll be called  
into the eternal kingdom.  
God guide me on this long road I have not travelled before.  
I think everything is folly except for loving God.**

## **A BLESSING FOR DEATH**

**I pray that you will have the blessing of being consoled  
and sure about your own death.**

**May you know in your own soul that there is no need to be afraid.**

**When your time comes, may you be given  
every blessing and shelter that you need.**

**May there be a beautiful welcome for you  
in the home that you are going to.**

**You are not going somewhere strange.**

**You are going back to the home that you never left.**

**May you have a wonderful urgency to live your life to the full.**

**May you live compassionately and creatively  
and transfigure everything that is negative within you and about you.**

**When you come to die may it be after a long life.**

**May you be peaceful and happy**

**and in the presence of those who really care for you.**

**May your going be sheltered and your welcome assured.**

**May your soul smile in the embrace of your anamcara.**

**John O' Donoghue**

## **On the Death of the Beloved**

**Though we need to weep your loss, you dwell in that safe place in our hearts where no storm or night or pain can reach you.**

**Your love was like the dawn brightening over our lives,  
Awakening beneath the dark a further adventure of colour.**

**The sound of your voice found for us a new music that brightened everything.**

**Whatever you enfolded in your gaze quickened in the joy of its being;  
You placed smiles like flowers on the altar of the heart.  
Your mind always sparkled with wonder at things.**

**Though your days here were brief, your spirit was alive, awake, complete.**

**We look toward each other no longer from the old distance of our names;  
Now you dwell inside the rhythm of breath, as close to us as we are to ourselves.**

**Though we cannot see you with outward eyes, we know our soul's gaze is upon your face,  
Smiling back at us from within everything to which we bring our best refinement.**

**Let us not look for you only in memory, where we would grow lonely without you.**

**You would want us to find you in presence, beside us when beauty brightens, when kindness glows and music echoes eternal tones.**

**When orchids brighten the earth, darkest winter has turned to spring;  
May this dark grief flower with hope in every heart that loves you.**

**May you continue to inspire us:**

**To enter each day with a generous heart.**

**To serve the call of courage and love until we see your beautiful face again  
In that land where there is no more separation, where all tears will be wiped from our mind, and where we will never lose you again.**

**John O'Donoghue**

## **A PRAYER FOR THE DEPARTED**

**Remember, O Lord, those who have fallen asleep  
in hope of resurrection to eternal life,  
our fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters,  
and all those who have died in piety and faith;  
And pardon them every offence, willing and unwilling,  
in word or deed or thought, by which they have offended.**

**Settle them in places of light,  
places of green pasture, places of rest,  
from which all sorrow, grief and sighing have fled;  
Where the presence of your face  
gives joy to all your saints from every age.**

**Grant them and us your Kingdom,  
and participation in your ineffable and eternal good things,  
and the enjoyment of your infinite and blessed life.**

**For you are the life, the resurrection, and the repose  
of your servants who have fallen asleep, Christ our God,  
And to you we give glory,  
together with your father who is without beginning,  
and your all-holy, good, and life-giving spirit,  
now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen**

**(Orthodox Liturgy Prayer Book)**

## **GRIEF**

**Grief cannot be shared, for it is mine alone.  
Grief is a dying within me,  
A great emptiness, a frightening void.  
It is loneliness, a terrible dread.  
Another's words do not help.  
A reasoned argument explains little  
For having tried too much.**

**Silence is the best response to another's grief.  
Not the silence that is a pause in speech,  
Awkward and unwanted,  
But one that unites heart to heart.  
Love, speaking in silence, is the way into  
The void of another's grief.**

**The best of all loves comes silently,  
And slowly too, to soften the pain of grief,  
And begin to dispel the sadness.  
It is the love of God, warm and true,  
Which will touch the grieving heart and heal it.**

**He looks at the grieving person and has pity,  
For grief is a great pain.  
He came among us to learn about grief,**

**And much else too, this Man of Sorrows.  
He knows. He understands.  
Grief will yield to peace – in time.**

**Cardinal Basil Hume**

## **ANYONE IS CAPABLE OF GOING TO HEAVEN.**

**Heaven is our home.**

**People ask me about death and whether I look forward to it and I answer, "Of course", because I am going home.**

**Dying is not the end, it is just the beginning.**

**Death is a continuation of life.**

**This is the meaning of eternal life;**

**It is where our soul goes to God, to speak to God,**

**To continue loving him with greater love**

**because in Heaven we shall be able to love him**

**with our whole heart and our soul**

**because we only surrender our body in death -**

**our heart and our soul live forever.**

**When we die we are going to be with God,**

**And with all those we have known who have gone before us:**

**Our family and our friends will be there waiting for us.**

**Heaven must be a beautiful place.**

**Every religion has an eternity, another life.**

**People who fear death are the ones who believe this is the end.**

**I have not known anyone die in fear**

**if they have witnessed the love of God.**

**They have to make their peace with God, as do we all.**

**People die suddenly all the time**

**so it could happen to us too at any moment.**

**Yesterday is gone and tomorrow has not yet come,**

**so we must live each day as if it were our last,**

**so that when God calls us we are ready, ,**

**and prepared to die with a clean heart.**

**Blessed Teresa of Calcutta**

**Then Almitra spoke, saying,  
"We would ask now of Death."  
And he said: "You would know the secret of death.  
But how shall you find it unless you seek it in the heart of life?  
The owl whose night-bound eyes are blind unto the day  
cannot unveil the mystery of light.  
If you would indeed behold the spirit of death,  
open your heart wide unto the body of life.  
For life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one.**

**In the depth of your hopes and desires  
lies your silent knowledge of the beyond;  
And like seeds dreaming beneath the snow  
your heart dreams of spring.  
Trust the dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity.  
Your fear of death is but the trembling of the shepherd  
when he stands before the king  
whose hand is to be laid upon his in honour.**

**Is the shepherd not joyful beneath his trembling,  
That he shall wear the mark of the king?  
Yet is he not more mindful of his trembling?**

**For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind  
and to melt into the sun?**

**And what is it to cease breathing  
but to free the breath from its restless tides,  
that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered?**

**Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.  
And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall climb.  
And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly  
dance."**

**Kahil Gibran / "The Prophet"**



## WHAT IS DYING

**What is dying?**

**I am standing on the sea shore,**

**A ship sails in the morning breeze and starts for the ocean.**

**She is an object of beauty and I stand watching her**

**till at last she fades on 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 Brent**

## **ETERNAL REST**

**Faith admits us into death's secrets.**

**Death is not the end of the road, but a gateway to a better place.**

**It is in this place that our noblest aspirations will be realised.**

**It is here that we will understand how our experiences of goodness, love, beauty and joy are realities which exist perfect in God.**

**It is in heaven that we shall rest in him**

**and our hearts will be restless until they rest in God.**

**We, left to continue our pilgrimage through life, weep and mourn.**

**You, - are on your way to union with him who loves you so.**

**He knows the love which you had for others.**

**God speaks now of his love for you.**

**Our tears will not be bitter ones now,**

**but a gentle weeping**

**to rob our sadness of its agony**

**and lead at last to peace, peace with God.**

**Cardinal Basil Hume**

## **WHEN TOMORROW STARTS WITHOUT ME**

**When tomorrow starts without me, and I'm not there to see;  
If the sun should rise and find your eyes all filled with tears for me;  
I wish so much you wouldn't cry the way you did today,  
While thinking of the many things we didn't get to say.**

**I know how much you love me, as much as I love you,  
And each time you think of me I know you'll miss me too.  
But when tomorrow starts without me, please try to understand,  
That an angel came and called my name and took me by the hand,  
And said my place was ready in heaven far above  
And that I'll have to leave behind all those I dearly love.**

**But as I turned to walk away, a tear fell from my eye,  
For all life, I'd always thought I didn't want to die.  
I had so much to live for and so much yet to do,  
It seemed almost impossible that I was leaving you.  
I thought of all the yesterdays, the good ones and the bad,  
I thought of all the love we shared and all the fun we had.**

**If I could relive yesterday, I thought just for a while  
I'd say goodbye and kiss you and maybe see you smile,  
But then I fully realised that this could never be,  
For emptiness and memories would take the place of me.  
And when I thought of worldly things that I'd miss come tomorrow,  
I thought of you, and when I did, my heart was filled with sorrow.**

**But when I walked through heaven's gate, I felt so much at home,  
When God looked down and smiled at me, from his Golden throne,  
He said, "This is eternity and all I've promised you.  
Today for life know what is past but here it starts anew.  
I promise no tomorrow, but today will always last,  
And since each day's the same day, there's no longing for the past.**

**But you have been so faithful, so trusting, so true,  
Though there were times you did some things you knew you shouldn't do.  
But you have been forgiven and now at last you're free.  
So won't you take my hand and share My life with me?  
So when tomorrow starts without me, don't think we're far apart  
For every time you think of me, I'm right here in your heart.**

**David M Romano**

**Do not stand by my grave and weep  
I am not there. I do not sleep.  
I am a thousands winds that blow  
I am a diamond glint on snow  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain  
I am the gentle autumn rain  
When you awake in the morning hush  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
Of quiet birds in circling flight  
I am the soft starshine at night  
Do not stand by my grave and cry  
I am not there...I did not die.**

**Mary Elixabeth Frye - 1932**

## WHEN I COME HOME

When I come home at the end of the road,  
And the sun has set for me,  
I want no tears in a gloom-filled room :  
Why cry for a soul set free?  
Miss me a little but not too long,  
And not with your heads bowed low,  
Remember the Love that we once shared,  
Miss me, but let me go.  
For this is a journey we all must take,  
And each must go alone,  
It's all a part of the Master's plan -  
A step on the road to home.  
There is no night without a dawning,  
No winter without a spring,  
And beyond death's dark horizon,  
Our hearts once more will sing -  
For those who leave us for a while,  
Have only gone away,  
out of a restless careworn world,  
into a 'Brighter Day'.

Anu Shraddha

## **DO NOT SEARCH FOR ME**

**Do not search for me down among the marble headstones  
where rooks on November branches make  
gathering cry for the dying year.**

**Do not look for me where summer's leaves  
decay on graves of winter grass -**

**Do not imagine me as last you saw me pale,  
bruised and empty of life.**

**I am not here -**

**But see that shaft of sunlight which spots the grey  
dark lake of late November**

**on the heather hillside in Donegal**

**or listen to the thrush squeeze out the last notes  
of its sunny summer song -**

**I hear the laughter I splashed in my sister's face  
on the sun-drenched beach that summer before  
I left you.**

**I go on playing, not where winter withers  
but where spring is eternal.**

**When I am dead, cry for me a little. Think of me sometimes -**

**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 will leave you in peace  
and while you live let your thoughts be with the living.**

*John McCullagh*

**All of us earth-people will some day be asked to fold up our tents and come home.**

**Death and life stand close together.**

**It is difficult at times to see where one begins and the other ends.**

**There is really no death for those caught up in God,  
only a moment of passing over, a moment of folding up  
your tent,  
a hard, painful, giving-up moment. It is always painful to  
let go.**

**We praise a person who had the vision to let go.**

**We praise a God who had the love to ask that person to let  
go.**

**O God of life, it is in our moments of not letting go that we  
truly experience death and all the while it is life that you  
have planned for us!**

**O God of life dip us into the mystery of letting go, of folding  
up our tents, so we, your earthen vessels, can bear the  
beauty of the breaking, and hold the fullness of the life.**

**Do earth-people always call things by the wrong name?**

**Is it death we celebrate?**

**Or is it life?**

**Or is it letting go?**

**I warn you**

**if God gives you the grace to let go**

**get ready for an unexpected transformation!**

## LETTER FROM HEAVEN

To my dearest family some things I'd like to say  
But first of all to let you know, that I arrived today  
I'm writing this from heaven. Where I shall dwell with God above  
Here, there's no more tears of sadness. Just eternal love.  
Please do not be unhappy, because I'm out of sight  
Remember that I am with you every morning, noon and night.  
That day I had to leave you when my life on earth was through  
God picked me up and hugged me and said, "I welcome you"  
"It's good to have you back again, you were missed while you were gone  
As for your dearest family, they'll be here later on.  
I need you here right now, because you're part of my great plan  
There's so much that we have to do to help our mortal man"  
God gave me a list of things that he wished for me to do  
And foremost on the list was to watch and care for you  
And when you lie in bed at night, the days chores put to flight  
God and I are closest to you in the middle of the night.  
When you think of my life on earth and all those loving years  
Because you are only human, there are bound to bring you tears  
But do not be afraid to cry, it does relieve the pain  
Remember there would be no flowers, unless there was some rain  
I wish that I could tell you all what God has already planned  
But if I were to tell you, you wouldn't understand  
But one thing is for certain though my life on earth is o'er  
I'm closer to you now than I ever was before  
There are many rocky roads ahead and many hills to climb  
But together we can do it by taking one day at a time  
When you are walking down the street and you've got me on your mind  
Remember I'm walking in your footsteps only half a step behind  
And when it's time for you to go...from that body to be free  
Remember you're not going you're coming here to me.

Ruth Ann Mahaffey



## **Death is Nothing at all**

**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 in your tone  
wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow  
laugh as we always laughed  
at the little jokes we enjoyed together  
pray 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 the trace of a shadow in it  
Life means all that it ever meant  
it is the same as it ever was  
there is unbroken continuity  
why should I be out of mind  
because I am out of sight?  
I am waiting for you  
somewhere very near  
just around the corner  
All is well**

**Henry Scott Holland  
(1847-1918) Canon of St Paul's Cathedral**

**Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings,  
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth  
Of sun-split clouds, and done a hundred things  
You have not dreamed of,  
Wheeled and soared and swung  
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there  
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung  
My eager craft through footless halls of air.**

**Up, up the long, delirious burning blue  
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace,  
Where never lark, nor even eagle flew,  
And, while with silent lifting mind I've trod  
The high, un-trespassed sanctity of space,  
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.**

**John Gillespie Magee 1922 -1941**

## **Journey Home**

**My journey starts with a soft voice calling me into the night.  
I am lifted up and drawn toward a beautiful light.  
I am leaving my family, friends and all other earthly things.  
I am like a bird going toward the heavens, trying out my new wings.**

**But as I soar upward everything becomes so clear.  
Special arms are wrapped around me, removing all my fears.  
I am an eagle, climbing high over the pine trees,  
the lakes and the land.**

**A special love is gently leading me,  
taking me by the hand.**

**I have wings, I go higher into the deep blue of the sky.**

**But I am leaving you and I wonder why me,  
Oh God, why?**

**I fly like an eagle--but am more like a dove.**

**For I am leaving you all with a heart full of love.**

**My journey is taking me to a home far away.**

**That same voice promising I'll see you some day.**

**I leave you with so very much regret.**

**But please--do not grieve for me yet,  
for my soul and spirit are finally free.**

**I go at peace into eternity.**

**Joy Conner**

## Some Time

Some time at eve, when the tide is low,  
I shall slip my moorings and sail away  
With no response to a friendly hail,  
In the silent hush of the twilight pale,  
When the night stoops down to embrace the day  
And the voices call in the water's flow -  
Some time at eve, when the tide is low,  
I shall slip my moorings and sail away  
Through purple shadows that darkly trail  
O'er the ebbing tide of the unknown sea,  
And a ripple of waters to tell the tale  
Of a lonely voyager, sailing away  
To mystic isles, where at anchor lay  
The craft of those who have sailed before,  
O'er the unknown sea to the unknown shore.  
A few who have watched me sail away  
Will miss my craft from the busy bay;  
Some friendly barks that were anchored near,  
Some loving souls that my heart held dear,  
In silent sorrow will drop a tear:  
But I shall have peacefully furled my sail  
In moorings sheltered from storm and gale  
And greeting the friends who have sailed before  
O'er the unknown sea to the unknown shore.

Elizabeth Clark Hardy

## **Do Not Hurry**

**Do not hurry  
as you walk with grief.  
It does not help the journey  
Walk slowly,  
Pausing often,**

**Do not hurry as you walk with grief  
Be not disturbed  
by memories that come unbidden. Swiftly forgive  
and let Christ speak for you unspoken words.  
Unfinished conversation will be resolved in him.  
Be not disturbed.  
Be gentle with the one who walks with grief.  
If it is you, be gentle with yourself.  
Swiftly forgive, walk slowly, pausing often.  
Take time, be gentle, pausing often.**

**George MacDonald**

# RESURRECTION

I never suspected  
Resurrection  
To be so painful  
To leave me weeping  
With joy  
To have met you, alive and smiling, outside  
An empty tomb.  
With regret  
Not because I've lost you  
But because I've lost you in how I had you  
In understandable, touchable, kissable,  
Clingable flesh  
Not as fully Lord, but as grasp ably human.

I want to cling, despite your protest  
Cling to your body  
Cling to your, and my, clingable humanity  
Cling to what we had, our past.

But I know that...if I cling  
You cannot ascend and  
I will be left clinging to your former self...  
unable to receive your present spirit."

Ronald Rolheiser

**Lord, someone we have loved has been taken from us,  
Someone precious, irreplaceable.  
And we know that there are no words we can say at this  
moment  
to express what we are feeling,  
No words that can alleviate our sorrow  
Or take away the pain.  
So we come this evening simply to bring you our grief, the shock  
and the pain,  
The emptiness, the anger and the despair,  
The loneliness, the fear and the uncertainty  
Which at times still overwhelms us.  
We come bringing those honestly before you,  
And asking for strength in the times of darkness.  
Hold on to us,  
Even when we find it hard to hold on to you.  
Be very near,  
Even when we feel you to be very far away.  
Support us in the weeks and months and yes even the years  
ahead.  
Grant us your comfort, as you have promised,  
Until the time finally comes when we can look back  
Not just with pain but thanksgiving  
Not just with sorrow but with joy.**

**When I am gone, release me, let me go,  
I have so many things to see and do,  
You mustn't tie yourself to me in tears  
Be happy that we had so many years,  
I gave to you my love, you can only guess,  
How much you gave to me in happiness,  
I thank you for the love you each  
Have shown,**

**But now its time I travel on alone.  
So grieve awhile for me if grieve you must,  
Then let your grief be comforted by trust,  
It's only for awhile that we must part,  
So bless the memories within your heart,  
I won't be far away, for life goes on,  
So if you need me, call and I will come.  
Though you can't see or touch me,  
I'll be near;  
And if you listen with your heart you'll hear  
All my love around you, soft and clear.  
And then when you must come this way alone,  
I'll greet you with a smile and a "WELCOME HOME"**

**Unknown**



**And God Said ...**

**I said, "God, I hurt."  
And God said, "I know."**

**I said, "God, I cry a lot."  
And God said, "That is why I gave you tears."**

**I said, "God, I am so depressed. "  
And God said, "That is why I gave you sunshine."**

**I said, "God, life is so hard."  
And God said, "That is why I gave you loved ones."**

**I said, "God, It hurts. " And God said, "I know. "  
I said, "God, my loved one died. " And God said, "So did mine. "**

**I said, "God, it is such a loss. "  
And God said, "I saw mine nailed to a cross  
I said, "God, but your loved one lives. "And God said, "So does  
yours."**

**I said, "God, where are they now?  
And God said, "Mine is on my Right, and yours is in the Light."**

**I said, "God, it hurts."And God said, "I know."**

*Posted on the wall at the Oklahoma City Bombing Site by K.C and Mike Kuzmic*