

A large, leafy tree stands in the center of a green field. The tree has a thick trunk and a wide, spreading canopy of green leaves. The field is lush and green, with some rows of crops visible. In the background, there are more trees and a blue sky with a few white clouds. Several birds are flying in the sky, scattered across the upper right portion of the image.

Wealden Celebrant
Poetry Collection

Second Edition

A collection of readings and poems for funerals

Compiled by Michael Gosden

WealdenCelebrant.co.uk



Dedicated to

Sally Gosden (Salter) & Mick (Curly) Gosden
Mum & Dad

*Humble, caring, brave,
strong and loved beyond words.*



St Wilfrid's Hospice

St Wilfrid's Hospice (Eastbourne) has a special place in my heart as both of my parents were looked after by their amazing team within a few years of each other.

The Hospice is a bright, friendly, and beautiful 'home from home' for the people within their care. A wide range of services are offered that compliments their mission statement.

"To see a community where people talk openly about dying, live well until the end of their life and where nobody dies alone, afraid or in pain"

They provide unrivalled care, dignity, and human kindness to everyone - patient, family member or friends and 70% of their operating costs come from public support.

Use the link to visit their website and see for yourselves, or pop in for one of their delicious cheese scones or a slice of cake in their amazing café...



St Wilfrid's Hospice - 1 Broadwater Way – Eastbourne - BN22 9PZ

I know for certain that we never lose the people we love - even to death, they continue to participate in every act, thought and decision we make.

Their love leaves an indelible imprint on our memories, we find comfort in knowing that our lives have been enriched by having shared their love.

Leo Buscaglia

Poetry is written to be read, heard, and shared.

All poems within this publication have been in the public domain for some time.
If you know the author of any poems that I have not acknowledged, please email:
enquiries@wealdencelebrant.co.uk

**Additional copies of this book are available for £5 (plus P&P)
Contact details are on the inner rear cover.**



Hello,

I have lived in Sussex all my life. I went to school in Hailsham and in my teens we moved to the small village of Punnetts Town.

I have had a wide and varied career, I worked in the building trade, the NHS and then 26 years in the prison service.

I've had the pleasure of working with some of the nicest people anyone could wish to, but have also experienced violence, addiction, hardship, and situations that many people will thankfully never encounter, giving me a broad and diverse set of life skills & experiences.

And so, having 'hung up my keys', I spend my time helping families to create ceremonies that are memorable and poignant, capturing the essence of the life and influence their loved one had on all whom they knew.

I hope you enjoy my selection of readings and poems...

Michael

Wealden Celebrant

*My role is as a conduit – a narrator,
drawing together the threads
and weaving them into a tapestry
of a life lived and loved.*

*Bringing back cherished memories,
thoughts, feelings, and milestones'*



She Is Gone (He Is Gone)

You can shed tears that she is gone
Or you can smile because she has lived.

You can close your eyes and pray that she will come back
Or you can open your eyes and see all that she has left.

Your heart can be empty because you can't see her
Or you can be full of the love that you shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.

You can remember her and only that she is gone
Or you can cherish her memory and let it live on.

You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back
Or you can do what she would want:
Smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

David Harkins



Let Me Go

When I come to the end of the road and the sun has set for me
I want no rites in a gloom filled room, why cry for a soul set free?

Miss me a little, but not for long,
and not with your head bowed low.
Remember the love that once we shared.

Miss me but let me go.

For this is a journey we all must take, and each must go alone.
It's all part of the master plan, a step on the road to home.

When you are lonely and sick at heart – go to the friends we know.
Laugh at all the things we used to do, miss me, but let me go.

Christina Rossetti

Footprints in the Sand

One night I dreamed a dream.

As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.

Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.

For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,

One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,

I looked back at the footprints in the sand.

I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,

especially at the very lowest and saddest times,

there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.

“Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,

You’d walk with me all the way.

But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my

life, there was only one set of footprints.

I don’t understand why, when I needed You the most,

You would leave me.”

He whispered, “My precious child, I love you and will never leave you,

Never, ever, during your trials and testing’s.

When you saw only one set of footprints,

It was then that I carried you.”

Mary Fishback Powers

Afterglow

I’d like the memory of me to be a happy one.

I’d like to leave an afterglow of smiles when life is done.

I’d like to leave an echo whispering softly down the ways,
Of happy times and laughing times and bright and sunny days.

I’d like the tears of those who grieve, to dry before the sun;
Of happy memories that I leave when life is done.

Helen Lowrie Marshall

Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep

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.

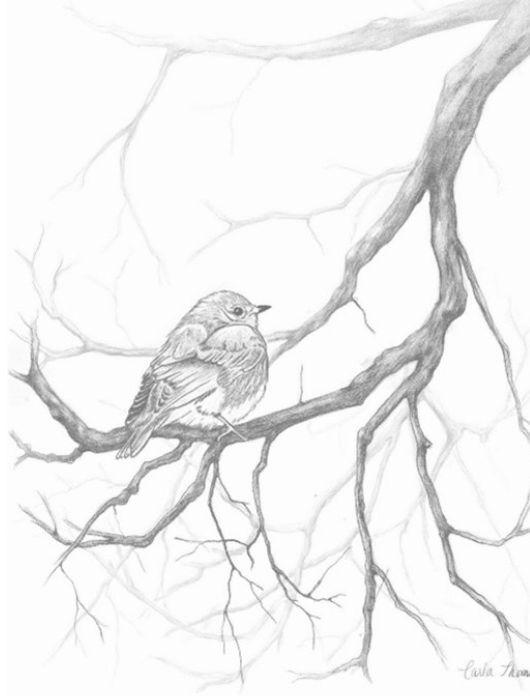
When you wake in the morning hush,
I am the swift, uplifting rush

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!)

Mary Elizabeth Frye



I carry your heart with me

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...

E.E Cummings

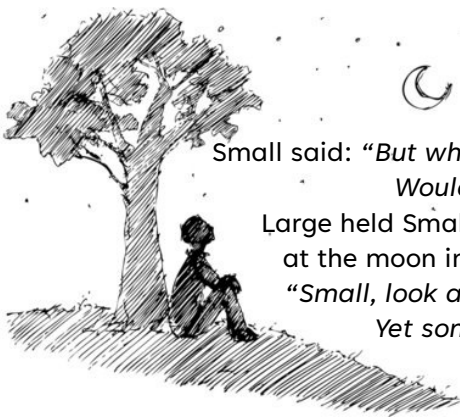


Beyond The Empty Chair

Look beyond the empty chair. To know a life well spent
Look beyond the solitude – to days of true content.

Cherish in your broken heart, each moment gladly shared
And feel the touch of memory. Beyond the empty chair.

Anon



An extract from ‘No Matter What’

Small said: *“But what about when you’re dead and gone?
Would you love me then? Does love go on?”*

Large held Small snug as they looked out at the night,
at the moon in the dark and the stars shining bright.

“Small, look at the stars – how they shine and glow.

Yet some of those stars died a long time ago.

Still they shine in the evening skies...

Love, like starlight, never dies”.

Debi Gliori

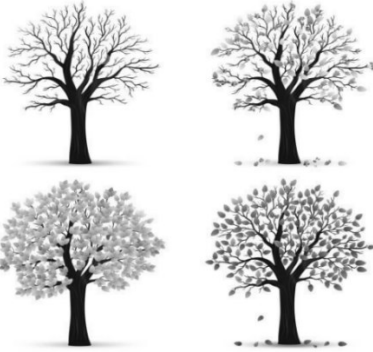
Life Well Lived

A life well lived is a precious gift, of hope and strength and grace,
From someone who has made our world a brighter, better place.

It’s filled with moments, sweet and sad, with smiles and sometimes tears,
With friendships formed and good times shared,
and laughter through the years.

A life well lived is a legacy, of joy and pride and pleasure,
A living, lasting memory our grateful heart’s will treasure.

Anon



The Comfort and Sweetness of Peace

After the clouds, the sunshine,
after the winter, the spring,
after the shower, the rainbow,
for life is a changeable thing.

After the night, the morning,
bidding all darkness cease,
after life's cares and sorrows,
the comfort and sweetness of peace.

Helen Steiner Rice

The Dash

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend,
He referred to the dates on the gravestone from the beginning...to the end.

He noted that first came the date of birth and spoke the following date
with tears,
But he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time that they spent alive on earth.
And now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own – the cars...the house...the cash.
What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.

So, think about this long and hard. Are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left that can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough to consider what's true and real,
And always try to understand the way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger and show appreciation more,
And love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile,
Remembering this special dash might only last a little while.

So, when your eulogy is being read with your life's actions to rehash,
Would you be proud of the things they say about how you spent YOUR
dash?

Linda Ellis

Death Is Nothing At All

Death is nothing at all – It does not count.
I have only slipped away into the next room.
Nothing has happened.

Everything remains exactly as it was. I am I, and you are you,
And the old life that we lived so fondly together is untouched, unchanged.
Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.

Call me by the old familiar name.
Speak of 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 that 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 an effort, without the ghost of a shadow upon it.

Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same as it ever was.
There is absolute and unbroken continuity.
What is this death but a negligible accident?

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 round the corner.

All is well.
Nothing is hurt; nothing is lost.
One brief moment and all will be as it was before.
How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again!

Henry Scott-Holland



Intimations of Immortality

What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now forever taken from my sight,

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower.

We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind.

William Wordsworth



One At Rest

Think of me as one at rest, for me you should not weep.
I have no pain no troubled thoughts for I am just asleep.

The living thinking me that was, is now forever still.
And life goes on without me now, as time forever will.

If your heart is heavy now because I've gone away
Dwell not long upon it friend – for none of us can stay

Those of you who liked me, I sincerely thank you all
And those of you who loved me, I thank you most of all.

And in my fleeting lifespan, as time went rushing by
I found some time to hesitate, to laugh, to love, to cry

Matters it now if time began, If time will ever cease?
I was here, I used it all, and now I am at peace.

A J Stanley

If only life

If only life could just stand still at some appropriate time,
When every day is fragrant and bright, and the sun constantly shines.

But life cannot stand still, and to live,
we must have our share of heartache and fears;

For we never could help another's sad heart
If we hadn't known tears through the years.

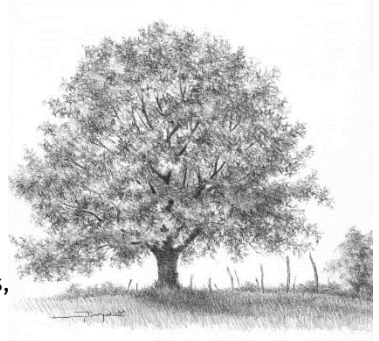


The Life That I Have

The life that I have Is all that I have,
and the life that I have Is yours.
The love that I have, of the life that I have
Is yours and yours and yours.
A sleep I shall have A rest I shall have

Yet death will be but a pause
For the peace of my years in the long green grass,
will be yours, and yours and yours.

Leo Marks



Loving Memories (Your Gentle Face)

Your gentle face and patient smile – with sadness we recall,
You had a kindly word for each – and died beloved by all.

The voice is mute and stilled the heart, that loved us well and true,
Ah, bitter was the trial to part, from one so good as you.

You are not forgotten loved one, nor will you ever be,
As long as life and memory last – we will remember thee.

We miss you now, our hearts are sore,
As time goes by we miss you more.

Your loving smile, your gentle face,
No one can fill your empty place.



A Poem for Dad

Dad, you were just a boy, so many years ago.
You had your loves and had your dreams, you watched us come and go.

You watched us make the same mistakes, that you had made before,
But that just made you hold us tight, and love us all the more.

We haven't always thought about the things that you have seen.
To us you've just been 'Dad', no thought of who you've been.

But we remember now in love, your life from start to end,
And we're just glad we knew you, as father, and as Friend.

Two Days

There are two days in every week about which we should not worry,
Two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension.
One of these days is Yesterday with its mistakes and cares,

its faults and blunders, its aches and pains.

Yesterday has passed forever beyond our control.

All the money in the world cannot bring back Yesterday.

We cannot undo a single act we performed,

We cannot erase a single word we said.

Yesterday is gone.

The other day we should not worry about is Tomorrow
with its possible adversities, its burdens, its large promise and poor
performance.

Tomorrow is beyond our immediate control.

Tomorrow's sun will rise, either in splendour or behind a mask of clouds,
But it will rise – Until it does, we have no stake in Tomorrow, for it is yet
unborn.

This leaves only one day – Today.

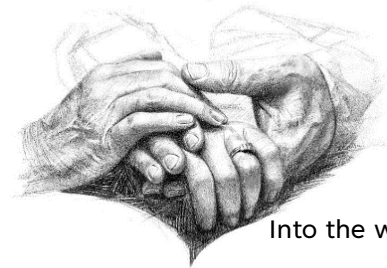
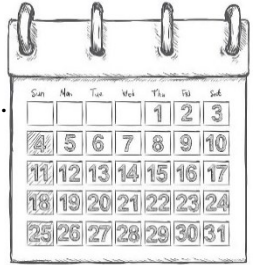
Any man can fight the battles of just one day.

It is only when you and I add the burdens of those two awful eternities,
Yesterday and tomorrow, that we break down.

It is not the experience of Today that drives men mad,

It is remorse and bitterness for something which happened Yesterday

And the dread of what Tomorrow may bring.



We let you go

Into the freedom of wind and sunshine

We let you go

Into the dance of the stars and the planets

We let you go

Into the wind's breath and the hands of the star maker

We let you go

We love you, we miss you, we want you to be happy

Go safely, go dancing, go running home.

Ruth Burgess

You've Just Walked on Ahead of Me

You've just walked on ahead of me, and I've got to understand
You must release the ones you love, and let go of their hand.

I try and cope the best I can – but I'm missing you so much
If I could only see you and once more feel your touch.

Yes, you've just walked on ahead of me, don't worry I'll be fine
But now and then I swear I feel – your hand slip into mine.

Joyce Grenfell

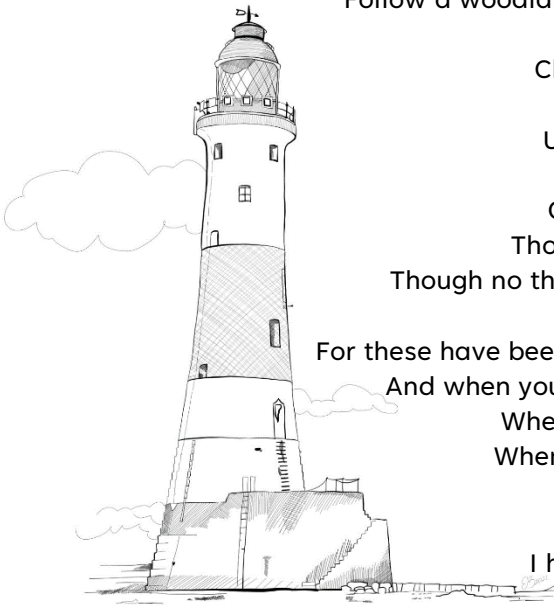


Instructions

When I have moved beyond you in the adventure of life,
Gather in some pleasant place and there remember me
With spoken words, old and new.
Let a tear if you will, but let a smile come quickly
For I have loved the laughter of life.
Do not linger too long with your solemnities.

Go eat and talk, and when you can;
Follow a woodland trail, climb a high mountain,
Walk along the wild seashore,
Chew the thoughts of some book
Which challenges your soul.
Use your hands some bright day
To make a thing of beauty
Or to lift someone's heavy load.
Though you mention not my name,
Though no thought of me crosses your mind,
I shall be with you,
For these have been the realities of my life for me.
And when you face some crisis with anguish.
When you walk alone with courage,
When you choose your path of right,
I shall be very close to you.
I have followed the valleys,
I have climbed the heights of life.

Arnold Crompton



Parable On Immortality

I am standing upon the seashore.
A ship at my side spreads her white
sails to the morning breeze and starts
for the blue ocean. She is an object of
beauty and strength.

I stand and watch until at last she
hangs like a speck of white cloud just
where the sea and the sky come down
to mingle with each other.

Then someone at my side says,
“There she goes.”

Gone where? Gone from my
sight...that is all. She is just as large
in mast and hull and spar as she was when she left my side and just as
able to bear her load of living freight to the place of destination. Her
diminished size is in me, not in her.

And just at the moment when someone at my side says, “There she goes”,
there are other eyes watching her coming and other voices ready to take
up the glad shout, “Here she comes!”

Henry Van Dyke



Simple Message

Blessed are those who give meaning to our lives,
And precious is the example they leave behind.
May our sorrows diminish as we recall their strength.
May their wisdom protect us and help us to live.
Let our grief be transformed into tenderness
For those who are still with us

Goodbye

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

Remember Me

To the living, I am gone.
To the sorrowful, I will never return.
To the angry, I was cheated,
But to the happy, I am at peace,
And to the faithful, I have never left.
I cannot be seen, but I can be heard.
So as you stand upon a shore, gazing at a beautiful sea
Remember me.

As you look in awe at a mighty forest and its grand majesty
Remember me.

As you look upon a flower and admire its simplicity
Remember me.

Remember me in your heart, your thoughts,
your memories of the times we loved,

The times we cried, the times we fought, the times we laughed.
For if you always think of me, I will never be gone.

Margaret Mead



Something Beautiful Remains

The tide recedes but leaves behind bright seashells on the sand.
The sun goes down, but gentle warmth still lingers on the land.
The music stops, and yet it echoes on in sweet refrains.
For every joy that passes, something beautiful remains.

Martha Vashti Pearson



If I Should Go

If I should go before the rest of you,
break not a flower nor inscribe a stone
Nor when I'm gone speak in a 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



At times like this

We may look through books for the perfect words
To give form to our feelings, make the thing complete,
Set the matter at rest.

But in the hours of searching, each piece lies rejected:
Too precise, too difficult – too harsh, not relevant,
Implying what we do not wish.

But look into the grey wide sky, and the thoughts will come like this,

Remember me when I loved you most – and you loved me most.
Remember me when I was my bravest – and when I did you right.

Then let that be our secret bond,
And just once let us rise in the morning and enjoy the light,
And know that the bird in the mist is returning to the sun.

David Lott

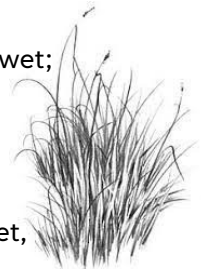
When I Am Dead, My Dearest

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, And if thou wilt, forget.

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.





Last Journey

There is a train at the station with a seat reserved just for me
I'm excited about its destination as I've heard it sets you free

The trials and tribulations – the pain and stress we breathe
Don't exist where I am going, only happiness I believe

I hope that you will be there to wish me on my way
It's not a journey you can join in – it's not your time today

There'll be many destinations – Some are happy, some are sad
Each one a brief reminder, of the great times that we've had

Many friends I know are waiting, who took an earlier train
To greet and reassure me, that nothing has really changed

We'll take the time together, to catch up on the past
To build a new beginning, one that will always last

One day you'll take your journey, on the train just like me
And I promise that I'll be there, at the station and you will see

That life is just a journey, enriched by those you meet
No-one can take that from you, it's always yours to keep

But now as no seat is vacant, you will have to muddle through
Make sure you fulfil your ambitions, as you know I'll be watching you

And if there's an occasion, to mention who you knew
Speak kindly of that person, as one day it will be you

Timothy Coote

Death is a Door

Death is only an old door
set in a garden wall
on gentle hinges it gives, at dusk
when the thrushes call.

Along the lintel are green leaves
beyond the light lies still;
very willing and weary feet
go over that cill.

There is nothing to trouble any heart;
nothing to hurt at all.
Death is only a quiet door
in an old wall.

Nancy Byrd Turner



Living Each Day

Now I am gone, now I am lost to you
Find me again just as you used to do:
In the house, when you go from room to room you'll find
The bits and pieces that I've left behind.

In the street, of course...I've stopped to window-shop;
You carry on, my love, I'll catch you up.
At night, as darkness slowly fills the sky:
I'm late; don't fret; I'll be there by and by.

At morning, when the sky is still blue-black,
I had to go out early: I'll be back.

In sunshine, as you peer into the glare -
A shape that seems to be both light and air.

In rain, as you look out and people pass -
One leaves a reflection printed on the glass.

In the garden, when you doze away the hours
I pass with a smile on my face, and my arms full of flowers.

Lisa Kitson



Our Hero

This world has many heroes; you know many of them by name, it's apparent that they gave their best and deserve their fame. But among all of the heroes this world has ever had, there's not one we admire more than our precious Dad.

He's more than just a hero; he never looked for praise, Was heroic in his quiet strength and in his caring ways. He may not be famous as those you hear about or see, but he's everything and so much more a hero ought to be.

He kept his word, was as good as gold, on him you could depend. Honest and loyal too; we're proud he was our friend. When we hear about a hero and the special things they've done, it reminds us of our Dad, for he's the greatest one.



Remember Only My Best

When I come to the end of my journey
And I travel my last weary mile,
Just forget if you can any frowns –
And remember only my smile.

Forget any dark words spoken,
But remember the good I have done.
Forget that there ever was heartache,
Just remember the laughter and fun.

Forget that I stumbled and blundered
And sometimes fell by the way;
Remember – I fought some hard battles,
And won some, by close of the day.

So do not grieve for my going,
And don't be sad for a day,
But in Summer just gather some flowers
And come to the place where I lay,

And then in the shade of the evening,
When the sun paints the sky in the west;
Stand for a moment beside me –
And remember only my best.



Funeral Blues

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,

Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message 'He is Dead'.

Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

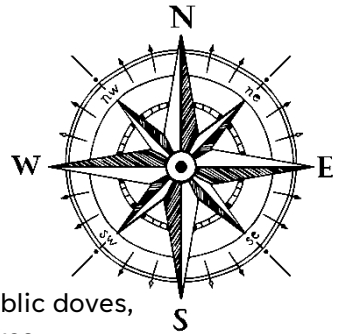
He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,

My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun,

Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

W.H Auden



Native American Poem

I give you this one thought to keep.
I am with you still. I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on the 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 think of me as gone.
I am with you still in each new dawn.

Dear Friends I go

Dear friends I go, but do not weep;
I've lived my life, so full and deep.

Throughout my life, I gave my best,
I earned my keep, I've earned my rest.

I never tried to be great or grand,
I tried to be a helping hand.

If I helped in a team, if I helped on my own,
It was more than repaid by good family and friends I have known;
And if I went the extra mile,
I did it with pleasure – it was all worthwhile.

If I brightened your path, then let it be
A small contribution from my loved ones and me;

Now sadly I leave you and travel alone
Through a mystic veil to the great unknown,

With such beautiful memories that will forever be
The way that I hope you'll remember me.



Memories

Life can never stay the same – No matter how we try
hands can never stop the clock of life from ticking by
But love remains, unchanging, In the care of sorrowing hearts
For as the love of life is stilled – The love of memory starts

My Journey's Just Begun

Don't think of me as gone away – My journey's just begun
Life holds so many facets, this earth is only one

Just think of me as resting, from the sorrows and the tears
In a place of warmth and comfort, where there are no days and years

Think of how I must be wishing, that you could know today
How nothing but your sadness, can really go away

And think of me as living, In the hearts of those I touched
For nothing loved is ever lost – And I know I was loved so much

Ellen Brenneman.

Roads Go Ever On

Roads go ever, ever on, Over rock and under tree,
By caves where never sun has shone, By streams that never find the sea;

Over snow by winter sown, And through the merry flowers of June,
Over grass and over stone, And under mountains in the moon.

Roads go ever ever on Under cloud and under star,
Yet feet that wandering have gone Turn at last to home afar.

Eyes that fire and sword have seen And horror in the halls of stone
Look at last on meadows green And trees and hills they long have known.

Roads go ever on and on Out from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone, Let others follow it who can!

Let them a journey new begin,
But I at last with weary feet will turn towards the lighted inn,
My evening-rest and sleep to meet.

J. R. R. Tolkien



Winnie the pooh

If ever there is a tomorrow when we're not together,
there is something you must always remember...

You are braver than you believe. Stronger than you seem
and smarter than you think.

But the most important thing is
even if we are apart I'll always be with you.

Epitaph on a Friend

An honest man here lies at rest,
The friend of man, the friend of truth,
The friend of age, and guide of youth:
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd;
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.

Robert Burns

So Many Different Lengths of Time

How long does a man live after all?

A thousand days or only one? One week or a few centuries?

How long does a man spend living or dying
and what do we mean when we say gone forever?

Adrift in such preoccupations, we seek clarification.

We can go to the philosophers
but they will weary of our questions.

We can go to the priests and rabbis
but they might be busy with administrations.

So, how long does a man live after all?
And how much does he live while he lives?
We fret and ask so many questions -
then when it comes to us
the answer is so simple after all.

A man lives for as long as we carry him inside us,
for as long as we carry the harvest of his dreams,
for as long as we ourselves live,
holding memories in common, a man lives.

His lover will carry his man's scent, his touch:
his children will carry the weight of his love.
One friend will carry his arguments,
another will hum his favourite tunes,
another will still share his terrors.

And the days will pass with baffled faces,
then the weeks, then the months,
then there will be a day when no question is asked,
and the knots of grief will loosen in the stomach
and the puffed faces will calm.

And on that day he will not have ceased
but will have ceased to be separated by death.
How long does a man live after all?
A man lives so many different lengths of time.



Don't weep for me

Don't weep for me, for it was time
to slip life's bonds and soar and climb.
Do not grieve for what is past,
for bodies are not meant to last.
Expendable, their only role
a growing medium for the soul.

Don't store my books, don't wear my rings
or cling to clothes or other things
of sentimental value, for
you do not need them anymore.

Browse through photos for a while,
but only if they make you smile
and call to mind how much we cared,
the things we did, the times we shared;
but do not sigh and wish them back,
or dress yourself in hopeless black,
for clouds will part and larks will rise –
the wheel must turn to make us wise.

And this is how 'twill ever be:
I'm part of you, you're part of me.
At every dawning's golden flare,
each velvet nightfall, I'll be there.

On woodland walk, by tossing sea,
some elemental part of me
will ride the wind and sing its song,
for each to each we all belong.

Your happiness will set me free;
beloved, do not weep for me.



Memories

Life can never stay the same – No matter how we try
hands can never stop the clock of life from ticking by
But love remains, unchanging, In the care of sorrowing hearts
For as the love of life is stilled – The love of memory starts

Our Mother kept a Garden

Our Mother kept a garden,
a garden of the heart;
she planted all the good things
that gave our lives their start.

She turned us to the sunshine
and encouraged us to dream,
fostering and nurturing
the seeds of self-esteem.

And when the winds and rains came
she protected us enough;
but not too much because she knew
we should stand up strong and tough.

Her constant good example
always taught us right from wrong,
markers for our pathway
that will last a lifetime long.

I am my mother's garden,
I am her legacy,
And I hope today she feels the love
Reflected back from me



Life's Lessons

You may have thought we didn't see – or that we hadn't heard
life's lessons that you taught us – but we got every word.

Perhaps you thought we missed it all and that we'd grown apart,
But Mum, we picked up everything – it's written on our hearts.

Without you, Mum, we wouldn't be the people we are today.
You built a strong foundation – no-one can take away.

We've grown up with your values and we're very glad we did,
So here's to you, dear Mum, from your ever grateful kids.

Dad

He never looked for praise
He was never one to boast
He just went on quietly working
For those he loved the most

His dreams were seldom spoken
His wants were very few
And most of the time his worries
Went unspoken too

He was there.... A firm foundation
Through all our storms of life
A sturdy hand to hold to
In times of stress and strife

A true friend we could turn to
When times were good or bad
One of our greatest blessings,
The man that we called Dad.

Karen K. Boyer



Not, how did he die, but how did he live?

Not, how did he die, but how did he live?
Not, what did he gain, but what did he give?

These are the units to measure the worth
Of a man as a man, regardless of his birth.

Nor what was his church, nor what was his creed?
But had he befriended those really in need?

Was he ever ready, with words of good cheer,
To bring back a smile, to banish a tear?

Not what did the sketch in the newspaper say,
But how many were sorry when he passed away?

In Memory Of Anyone Unknown To Me

At this particular time I have no one particular person to grieve for,
Though there must be many,
Many unknown ones going to dust slowly,
not remembered for what they have done or left undone.

For these, then, I will grieve
Being impartial, unable to deceive.

How they lived, or died, is quite unknown, and,
by that fact gives my grief purity
An important person quite apart from me
Or one obscure who drifted down alone.

Both or all I remember, have a place.
For these I never encountered face to face.

Sentiment will creep in. I cast it out wishing to give these classical repose,
No epitaph, no poppy and no rose

From me, and certainly no wish to learn about
The way they lived or died. – In earth or fire
they are gone – simply because they were human, I admire.



No night without

There is no night without a dawning
No winter without a spring
And beyond the dark horizon
Our hearts will once more sing

For those who leave us for a while
Have only gone away
Out of a restless, care worn world
Into a brighter day
Helen Steiner Rice

A butterfly lights beside us

A butterfly lights beside us like a sunbeam, and for a
brief moment its glory and beauty belong to our world:
but then it flies again. And though we wish it could
have stayed, we feel so lucky to have seen it.

Christmas from the Heart

I heard your voice in the wind today
and I turned to see your face;
the warmth of the wind caressed me
as I stood silently in place.

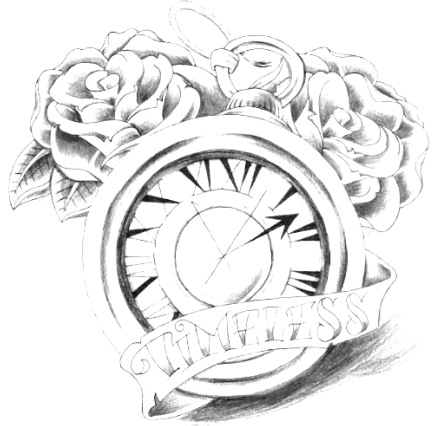
I felt your touch in the sun today
as its warmth filled the sky;
I closed my eyes for your embrace
and my spirit soared high.

I saw your eyes in the window pane
as I watched the falling rain;
it seemed as each raindrop fell
it quietly said your name.

I held you close in my heart today
it made me feel complete;
you may have died... but you are not gone
you will always be a part of me.

As long as the sun shines...
the wind blows...
the rain falls...
You will live on inside of me forever,
for that is all my heart knows.

Judy Burnette



One Last Goodbye

Thank you for coming,
I'm so glad you're here.
We've got one last goodbye
for me and those I hold dear.
You might find it hard, unfair, or sad,
but I see it as the chance
to reminisce about what we've had.
It's not the end when we die,
but one last chance to say goodbye.

Michele Meleen

A Life Well Lived

Ready or not, someday life will end, there will be no more sunrises, years, months, weeks, days, or hours, no more messages, calls or e-mails to be returned. Everything that has been collected, be it treasured or forgotten, will pass to someone else. Wealth, fame, and perceived power will shrivel to irrelevance, it will not matter what was owned or what was owed.

Grudges, resentments, frustrations, and jealousies will finally disappear, so too will hopes, ambitions, plans, and 'To Do' Lists.

The wins and losses that once seemed so important, will fade away.

It won't matter where you were born or what side of town you have lived.

It won't matter if you slept on the streets, rented, or owned a house.

It won't matter whether you were clever, beautiful, or brilliant.

Gender, skin colour, ethnicity or beliefs will be irrelevant.

So, what WILL matter?

What will be the measure of your days, weeks and years passed?

How will your life be valued?

What will matter is not what you bought – but what you have chosen to build. Not what you received – but what you have shared and given.

What will matter is not the level of success – but your significance.

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

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

What will matter is not your competence – but your integrity and character.

What will matter is not how many people you have known, rich or poor – but how many will miss you when you are gone.

What will matter are not your faded memories – but the memories of those who know and love you.

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

Continued on the next page

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident, it's not a matter of circumstance – It is one made of choice; one of your own choosing.

And in so doing, you dance and write your name with destiny – you chose to live a life that matters.

Adapted from original work by Donna Maris

The Best of You

You gave me the best of you,
But you didn't leave enough for yourself.

You gave me the best of you,
So you didn't have the strength to go on.

You gave me the best of you,
So your journey in this world was just too short.

Since you gave me the best of you,
Now I hold your memory forever in my heart.

Since you gave me the best of you,
I work each day to be the best person I can.

Since you gave me the best of you,
I give the best of me to your memory.

A Cricketer's Last Boundary

Weeping willows formed an honour guard
For the cricket ball writ with a noble name
A team of ten, which had once been eleven
Would never be the same side again

No bails united the forlorn stumps
Since this wicket had fallen some days ago
And as the bowler delivered to the lone batsman
The hushed crowd willed for a six to go

The magical sound of leather on willow
The sweet smell of freshly cut grass
A cricketer crossing the last boundary
To a third innings that would forever last

Michael Ashby



If

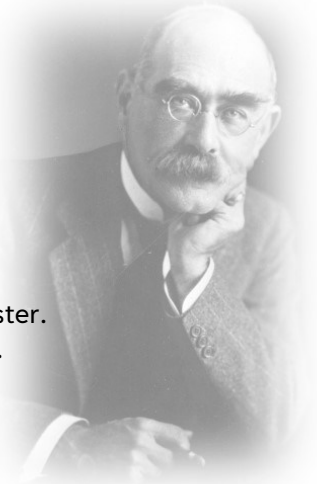
If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master.
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim.
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same.
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss.
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

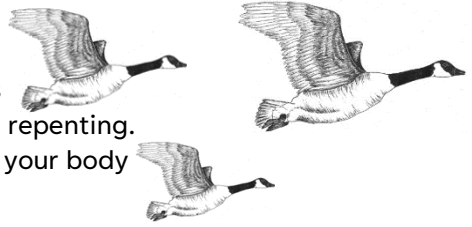
If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

Rudyard Kipling



Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.



Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.

Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –
over and over announcing your place in the family of things.

Mary Oliver

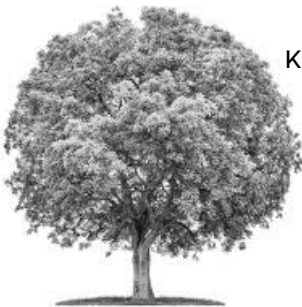
Fallen Limb

A limb has fallen from the family tree.
I keep hearing a voice that says, “Grieve not for me”.
Remember the best times, the laughter, the song.
The good life I lived while I was strong.

Continue my heritage, I’m counting on you.
Keep smiling and surely the sun will shine through.

My mind is at ease, my soul is at rest.
Remembering all, how I truly was blessed.

Continue traditions, no matter how small.
Go on with your life, don’t worry about falls
I miss you all dearly, so keep up your chin.
Until the day comes we’re together again.



Time will ease the hurt

The sadness of the present days
Is locked and set in time,
And moving to the future
Is a slow and painful climb.

But all the feelings that are now
So vivid and so real
Can't hold their fresh intensity
As time begins to heal.

No wound so deep will ever go
Entirely away;
Yet every hurt becomes
A little less from day to day.

Nothing else can erase the painful
Imprints on your mind;
But there are softer memories
That time will let you find.

Though your heart won't let the sadness
Simply slide away,
The echoes will diminish
Even though the memories stay.

Bruce Wilmer



Your Mother Is Always With You

She's the whisper of the leaves as you walk down the street.
She's the smell of certain foods you remember, flowers you pick,
the fragrance of life itself.
She's the cool hand on your brow when you're not feeling well.
She's your breath in the air on a cold winters' day.
She is the sound of the rain that lulls you to sleep, the colours of a rainbow.
Your mother lives inside your laughter.
She's the map you follow with every step you take.
She's your first love, your first friend, even your first enemy.
But nothing on Earth can separate you.
Not time, Not space, Not even death

Deborah R. Culve

Feel No Guilt In Laughter

Feel no guilt in laughter,
He'd know how much you care.
Feel no sorrow in a smile
That he's not here to share.

You cannot grieve forever;
He would not want you to.
He'd hope that you could carry on
The way you always do.

So, talk about the good times and
The way you showed you cared,
The days you spent together,
All the happiness you shared.

Let memories surround you,
A word someone may say
Will suddenly recapture
A time, an hour, a day,

That brings him back as clearly
As though he were still here,
And fills you with the feeling
That he is always near.

For if you keep those moments,
You will never be apart
And he will live forever,
Locked safely within your heart.



Because I Love You So

Time will not dim the face I love,
The voice I heard each day,
The many things you did for me,
In your own special way.

All my life I'll miss you,
As the years come and go,
But in my heart I'll keep you,
Because I love you so.

Farewell My Friends

It was beautiful as long as it lasted
The journey of my life.
I have no regrets whatsoever
Save 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 every turning of my life
I came across good friends,
Friends who stood by me,
Even when the 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



Hope

I fall asleep in the full and certain hope
that my slumber shall not be broken;
and that, though I be all-forgetting,
yet I shall not be all-forgotten,
but continue that life in the thoughts and deeds
of those I have loved.

Samuel Butler



'Tis Better To Have Loved and Lost

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Risk

To laugh, is to risk appearing the fool.
To weep, is to risk being called sentimental.
To reach out to another, is to risk involvement.
To expose feelings, is to risk showing your true self.
To place your ideas and your dreams before the crowd,
is to risk being called naive.
To love, is to risk not being loved in return.
To live, is to risk dying.
To hope, is to risk despair.
And to try, is to risk failure.



But risks must be taken, because the greatest risk in life is to risk nothing.

The person who risks nothing, does nothing,
has nothing, is nothing, and becomes nothing!
He may avoid suffering and sorrow,
but he simply can not learn, and feel, and change,
and grow, and love, and live.
Chained by his certitudes he is a slave,
he's forfeited his freedom.

Only the person who risks is truly free!

Extract from 'Undying: A Love Story'

All I can do, in what remains of my brief time,
is mention, to whoever cares to listen,
that a woman once existed, who was kind
and beautiful and brave, and I will not forget
how the world was altered, beyond recognition, when we met.

Michael Faber

It's Strange

It's strange we don't appreciate, the things we see each day
We never know their value, until they're cruelly snatched away
Things I took for granted then, her voice, her smile, her touch
I always knew I loved her – but I never knew how much

Not Ready to Let You Go

I wish that I could tell you
I'm not ready to let you go.
But you've already departed,
And my heart is feeling so low.

I miss that little twinkle
That used to light up your eyes.
And I miss the sound of your voice,
Your laughter and your sighs.

But most of all I miss
The way you made me feel,
Like nothing could ever harm me because
Your love was so strong and real.

There are others here who miss you,
And they've gathered here today.
Your life touched so many people,
Who became your friends along the way.

They want you to know they love you, too.
And they're filled with sadness and grief.
No one really wants to say goodbye,
So we'll just wish you eternal peace.

Kelly Roper



"In the midst of death, life persists.
In the midst of untruth, truth persists.
In the midst of darkness, light persists."

Mahatma Gandhi

"Life is like a garden. Perfect moments can be had,
but not preserved, except in memory."

Leonard Nimoy

"The human spirit is more powerful than any drug
and that is what needs to be nourished:
with work, play, friendship, family.
These are the things that matter."

Robin Williams

It's Strange

It's strange we don't appreciate, the things we see each day
We never know their value, until they're cruelly snatched away
Things I took for granted then, her voice, her smile, her touch
I always knew I loved her – but I never knew how much



I Do Not Think My Song Will End

I do not think my song will end
while flowers, grass and trees
abound with birds and butterflies
for I am one with these.

And I believe my voice will sound
upon the whispering wind
so long as even one remains
among those I call 'friend'.

I shall remain in hearts and minds
of loved ones that I knew,
and in the rocks and hills and streams
because I love those, too.

So long as love and hope and dreams
abide in earth and sky,
weep not for me, though I be gone,
I shall not really die.

John Hathcock

Pardon Me for Not Getting Up

Oh dear, if you're hearing this now I must have given up the ghost.
I hope you can forgive me for being such a rude and absent host.
Just talk amongst yourself my friends and share a drink or two.
For I am sure you will remember well how I loved to be with you.
Don't worry about mourning me, I was never easy to offend.
Share a story at my expense and we'll have a good laugh at the end.

“Though lovers be lost, love shall not.”

Dylan Thomas

I Thought We Had More Time

You brought me into this world,
And you raised me up strong.
I thought we had more time,
But I know now I was wrong.

If I could see you one more time,
See your much-loved face.
If only I could tell you thanks
And feel your sweet embrace.

Did you know how much I love you
Before you had to pass?
If we only had more time,
I wouldn't have to ask.

Why did I have to wait?
You're gone, and it's too late.
I worry about you not knowing,
And my tears will not stop flowing.

Death snatched you away,
And I must bear my shame.
I can say I love you in my heart,
But it's just not the same.

Thomma Lyn Grindstaff



Memory Can Tell Us Only What We Were

Memory can tell us only what we were in company with those we loved;
It cannot help us find out what each of us, alone, must now become.

Yet, no person is really alone;

Those who live no more still echo within our thoughts and words,
And what they did has become woven into what we are.

Richard Fife

“I shall pass this way but once; any good that I can do or any kindness I
can show to any human being; let me do it now. Let me not defer nor
neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.”

Etienne de Grellet

Bespoke Poetry

The following have been written by me.

Gone to soon.

We have been cheated out of so many things,
Future family milestones, growing old together, irritating one another,
Cheated from saying all those things I would like to have said.

But I have memories that will always be mine,
I have had the chance to create those with you.
Much of who I am is because of you
and the impact that you have made on my life.

So, I have decided that rather than feeling cheated,
I will feel gratitude, rather than regret I will feel comfort.
My love for you will never change with time
and I will forever cherish the time we had together.

Michael Gosden

To those of you who cared...

To many, I did not exist – and others would look away,
Not knowing how to be, how to act or what to say.
But there was also those who cared, who tried to understand,
Who loved me, looked after me – who offered a friendly hand.

Inside my own little world, I was an uncomplicated bloke,
Happy with chocolate, a monkey and of course a bottle of Coke!
But my life also had adventures with lots for me to do,
Canoeing, swimming - so many, that's just a few.

Painting, cooking and trips to the beach – nothing was too much bother,
And for my 50th birthday I went up in a helicopter for a hover!

No matter how grumpy or challenging I could be,
I was treated with kindness, love and dignity.

So, to all my friends at Carricks, a final line from me,
You were never just my carers; you were my family...

Michael Gosden

'An ode to John'...

A motorcycle mechanic – a curious breed.
Always on hand for a biker in need.
Removing parts when there's hardly any space.
Why on earth did they put it in that bloody place!.

Scratching his head with a roll up in mouth,
Some of the challenges seem to go south.
But before long - John has figured it out,
Of course, he can fix it – there was never a doubt.

In the early days working with skill and precision,
But a bike shop was really Johns vision
So, to Crowborough he went – up the White Hill
With his team of mechanics they practiced their skill

Working on bikes from near and yonder,
His proudest time with Joey and Honda,
Doubted by his teachers all along,
John, you certainly proved them all wrong.

Understated and humble
You didn't think you were clever
Your knowledge, your skill
Will be remembered forever.

Michael Gosden

'For you all'

You may be here in sadness, there may be tears for me,
I have no pain or sorrows; my soul is now set free.
I know you do not wish to be where you are today
Remembering the many things we didn't do or say.

I can't expect you to understand, just how this come to pass,
Although I didn't show it, I loved you to the last.
I lived my life as I wanted, and this is not the end,
My absence does not kill my love for my family and my friends.

Michael Gosden

'The Builder'

He worked with his hands, worn and weathered,
From years of toil and labour,
His trade was that of a brickkie,
Building was his favour.

Taking time to unwind,
Playing snooker or cards,
It's only right,
When you've worked so hard.

Through decades, countless bricks
Have passed through this man's hand,
His needs were simple, a fag, a trowel,
Some cement, and some sand.

Working his craft, creating homes for many to enjoy,
With care and dedication, ever since he was a boy,

The trowel is now still, the mixer is silent,
No more building will he endeavour,
Yet his work will stand the test of time,
And his memory will last forever.

Michael Gosden

'You are the guardian'

Draw upon your memories,
Let them dance within your mind.
For you are the guardian of these treasures,
Your loved one has left behind.

Michael Gosden

'It's Nature'

All nature has a lifespan, even woods, fields, and brook's
In silence they speak happiness beyond the reach of books.

An ageing tree will eventually fall and make way for tender shoots,
Their journey in the cycle of life as they then set down roots.

New growth begins on the forest floor – it's always been this way,
And sun and moon shall still abide, and with them night and day.

Michael Gosden

'I am Sussex'

Through glazed eyes you sit,
doing your best to hold back tears.
But feel no shame or awkwardness,
It's natural after all these years.

Together we've laughed,
Together we've cried,
This isn't any different,
And when your tears subside

Don't feel alone because I'm not there,
Draw strength from what we are.
Memories of us, and all we were,
Are never really that far.

I've lived a happy, purposeful life,
Tried best at all I do.
But my time was only that good,
Because it was shared with you.

For I am Proud from where I've come,
No man could ask for more,
I was born in Sussex,
And I am 'Sussex' – to the core.

Michael Gosden



A poem written for Marilyn...

I may not have been a pioneer or invented something grand,
And to some who didn't live as I did - it may be hard to understand,

I've led a quiet, private life,
Never said, 'I do' and became a wife.

But I spent my time as I wanted, and this you must not forget,
My time was filled with memories and seldom of regret,

No holidays grand nor lavish things – that was just not me,
My life was all about those close – about my family,

I do not need your pity, nor do I want your tears,
My life was full of what I wanted... across my many years.

Michael Gosden



Your story, Your Words

A service as unique as you are...

When I spoke at my dad's funeral and then some years later my mum's, I was armed with some incredible things that I could share with everyone who came to say goodbye.

You see I was lucky; both of my parents spoke enthusiastically and openly about their lives, about things that they would like said and how they wanted to be remembered.

And then it came to me... wouldn't it be special for you to have input in your own eulogy? It would mean that at your service you would be able to share your favourite most treasured stories and to say thank you to friends and family even though you are not physically there.

How does it work?

I simply meet with you and ask you a series of questions that I have crafted over time to give a spark to a eulogy, I then create your own '**Life story so far**' and keep it safe for whenever it may be put to use.

You can even record your own message if you wish, that can then be played in the future, making your service more memorable, poignant, and incredibly moving.

*'You see, when the time comes,
your funeral should be a celebration of your life
- and who better to provide some of the words than you!'*



My website contains a wealth of information to help you; Local florists, caterers, venues for wakes, crematorium details, and much more...

You are welcome to contact me for help or advice.

Michael

Other services include...

Funeral Celebrant - Bespoke poetry - Genealogy searches
Naming ceremonies - Renewal of vows - Toastmaster

Media services

Personalised visual tributes - Music editing & mixing
Photographic restoration & colourisation

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'Telling your loved one's story'

www.wealdencelebrant.co.uk

