

FUNERAL POETRY

and other resources



Compiled by

Steve Stacey
Civil Funeral Celebrant

December 2021

Introduction

'Poetry has meaning far beyond words. People love it. Poetry speaks to the emotions and the senses. It speaks of mystery and the indefinable. It's not what a poem says that matters most, it's how it makes people feel.

This is why poetry works well in a funeral ceremony. And it provides a useful antidote to all that prose, which everyone else has been speaking.'

Good Funeral Guide

Poetry in a service should be chosen carefully to reflect the person who has passed away and how the people at the service are feeling.

It has a purpose beyond sharing the words – focusing everyone's attention on the same thing for a few moments. Some poems are better early, some better in the closing stage of the service. **Those with red first lines are particularly good for the closing part of a service.**

Any contributions read by a family member are far better read near the beginning of the service. They will then be able to take in the rest of the service rather than feeling nervous waiting for 'their turn'.

The collection here is not intended to be a definitive list, but a selection of ones that have worked well in services. It changes regularly as families suggest additions.

Readings in the FIRST person work well near the end of a service, particularly and add a personal feel – a reminder that the loved one is still a part of our lives.

Some poems were written by the subject of the service and are used with the kind permission and enormous pride of their families.

Contents

Introduction	2
We Are Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made On... ..	6
I fall asleep	6
The Cloths of Heaven	6
Young & Old	7
God looked around his garden.....	7
All The World's a Stage	8
High Flight (An Airman's Ecstasy).....	9
Impressions of a Pilot	9
Miss Me but Let Me Go	10
Afterglow	10
The Golf Course In The Sky	10
Number's Up	11
For a Nurse	11
If ever there is tomorrow.....	12
Thank you for being a friend to me.....	12
A Parent Talks To A Child Before The First Game	12
The Great Game	14
Sea Fever	14
Crossing the Bar.....	14
Do Not Stand At My Grave and Weep	15
Do Not Think Of Me and Weep1.....	15
Do Not Think of Me and Weep 2.....	16
I am with you still - I do not sleep.....	16
Native American Prayer for Serenity	16
Great Wings.....	16
I am there	17
Do not weep for me for I have not gone.	17
Success	17
Play Jolly Music at my Funeral	18
You Left Quietly	18
Our Mother Kept a Garden	19
My Mother Kept A Garden	19
Our Parents Kept a Garden	19
Grandma	20
Grandad	20
Dad Always Said	21
With These Hands.....	22
*To be by a lake.....	23
Fisher of Men	23
The Angler's Wish	24
Angler's Prayer	24
A Sailor's Prayer	25
The Ship.....	25
I'm Fine Thank You	25
Poor But Blessed In The Old Days	27
Life	27
Death Is Nothing At All	28
Not, How Did He Die, but How Did He Live	29
Remember Me, But Don't Be Sad	29
If I Should Die	29
The Dash.....	30
Dust If You Must	30
Footprints in the Sand	31
Footprints.....	31
Footprints.....	31
One At Rest	32
God Saw You Getting Tired 1	32

If.....	33
Stop All The Clocks	33
When I'm Gone	33
A Reflection on an Autumn Day.....	34
Woodland Burial.....	34
The Life That I Have	35
We Will Remember Him	35
Feel no guilt in Laughter	36
Feel no guilt in Laughter	36
Don't cry for me.....	36
Look For Me In Rainbows	37
Breath	37
The Last Hero (Discworld 27)	37
Some People.....	37
He Is Gone	38
You Can Shed Tears	38
Epitaph on a Friend.....	38
Parents	39
The Traveller	40
Going home	41
If Tomorrow Never Comes.....	41
Your Mother Is Always With You.	41
A Mother's love	42
The Last Hero (Discworld 27)	42
I thank thee God, that I have lived.....	43
A Question.....	43
A butterfly	43
At every turning of my life.....	44
When God Saw You Getting Tired 2.....	44
When I'm gone	45
PRAYERS.....	46
A Celtic Blessing.....	46
The Serenity Prayer	46
The Lord's Prayer	46
The Lord	46
Reading: John 14: 1-7, 27.....	47
Psalms 23	47
Ecclesiastes 3.....	47
The Chain.....	48
The Broken Chain	48
Golden Memories.....	48
*Smile - A thought for today.....	49
Where do they go to?	49
No Man is an Island	49
Let Me Die, Working.....	50
Don't Think of Him as Gone Away	50
Remember me When I'm Gone Away.....	50
The Cord	51
Alzheimer's.....	51
Have A Nice Day	52
Silly Old Baboon	52
Courage - To Kill a Mockingbird	53
As We Look Back	53
Pardon Me for Not Getting Up.....	54
Warning.....	54
When I'm Gone	55
Some Folk.....	55
Remember Me 1	56
Remember Me 2.....	56

Remember Me 3	56
Remember Me 4	57
Some Folk	57
Remembering	57
The Gardener's Morning	58
The Wren	59
Instructions	59
You Never Said I'm Leaving 1	60
You Never Said I'm Leaving 2	60
Tomorrow	61
Your Mother	61
If only I could?	61
.....	61
The Gift Of Music	62
Why Worry	62
The Magic of Christmas	64
Missing You At Christmas	65
Deck the Halls	65
Examples of Family Tributes 1	66
Examples of Family Tributes 2	67
Top 10 popular songs	68
Top 10 hymns	68
Top 10 classical music	68

We Are Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made On...

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air;
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded in a sleep.

William Shakespeare: The Tempest, IV, i

I fall asleep

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

Samuel Butler (1835 – 1902)

The Cloths of Heaven

Had I the heaven's embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light;
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

W. B. Yeats

Young & Old

WHEN all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green ;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen ;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away ;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.
When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown ;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down ;
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among :
God grant you find one face there,
You loved when all was young.

Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) from The Water Babies

God looked around his garden

God looked around his garden
And found an empty place,
He then looked down upon the earth
And saw your tired face.

He put his arms around you
And lifted you to rest.
God's garden must be beautiful
He always takes the best.

He knew that you were suffering
He knew you were in pain.
He knew that you would never
Get well on earth again.

He saw the road was getting rough
And the hills were hard to climb.
So he closed your weary eyelids
And whispered, 'Peace be Thine'.

It broke our hearts to lose you
But you didn't go alone,
For part of us went with you
The day God called you home.

All The World's a Stage

Act I, Scene VII, features one of Shakespeare's most famous monologues, spoken by Jaques, which begins:

"All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts ..."
All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then, the whining school-boy with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then, a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden, and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then, the justice,
In fair round belly, with a good capon lined,
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws, and modern instances,
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

William Shakespeare: As You Like It Act II, Scene VII

High Flight (An Airman's Ecstasy)

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 untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

John Gillespie Magee Jr

John Gillespie McGee Jr was an American spitfire pilot who joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1940. He died over Tangmere, Sussex in 1941. He was nineteen.

Impressions of a Pilot

Flight is freedom in its purest form,
To dance with the clouds which follow a storm;
To roll and glide, to wheel and spin,
To feel the joy that swells within;
To leave the earth with its troubles and fly,
And know the warmth of a clear spring sky;
Then back to earth at the end of a day,
Released from the tensions which melted away.
Should my end come while I am in flight,
Whether brightest day or darkest night;
Spare me your pity and shrug off the pain,
Secure in the knowledge that I'd do it again;
For each of us is created to die,
And within me I know,
I was born to fly.

Gary Claud Stokor



Miss Me but Let Me Go

When I come to the end of the road
And the sun is set for me
I want no rites in a gloom filled room
Why cry for a soul like me
Miss me a little, but not too long
And not with your head 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
For it is part of the master plan
A step on the road to home
When you are lonely and sick of heart
Go to the friends we know
And bury your sorrows in doing good deeds
Miss me - but let me go.

Albert Guest

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 my life is done.

Helen Lowrie Marshall

The Golf Course In The Sky

As eighteen flags flew at half mast, and
Glasses were soberly raised high
The latest member was having a ball
At the golf course in the sky

Freed from the gravity of the situation
The first tee shot soared through space
Bringing a wondrous, beaming smile
To a kind, down to earth face

Surrounded by old club friends
Once thought never to be seen again
The infinity course beckoned ahead
Eighteen holes were for mere mortal men

Michael Ashby

Number's Up

I loved going to bingo
And seeing all my chums
I'd listen out for numbers
Hoping they would be the ones

A line, a house would pass me by
The frustration could make a grown man cry!

But I was patient and not het up
Eyes looking down, ears pricked like a pup
I'd calmly wait to hear the call
The call that says this is the ball

BINGO, I shout, it's my time
I finally got to complete that line!

I've been a daughter, mum, nan and wife
I had a ball and enjoyed my life
It's just that when I heard the call
The call had my number on the ball.

Rebecca Spilsbury

For a Nurse

When a calming, quiet presence was all that was needed,
In the excitement and miracle of birth or in the mystery and loss of life,
When a silent glance could uplift a patient, family member or friend,
At those times when the unexplainable needed to be explained,
she was there.

When the situation demanded a swift foot and sharp mind,
When a gentle touch, a firm push, or an encouraging word was needed,
To witness humanity's beauty, in good times and bad, without judgment;
To embrace the woes of the world, willingly, and offer hope,
she was there.

If ever there is tomorrow

"If ever there is 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're apart ...

I'll always be with you."

(from 'Winnie the Pooh' by A A Milne)

Thank you for being a friend to me

Thank you for being a friend to me,
when needing someone there.
My failing hopes to bolster
and my secret fears to share.

Thank you for being so good to me
when it was hard to know
the wisest course to follow,
what to do and where to go.

Thank you for giving me confidence
when I had lost my way.
Speaking the word that led me through
the tunnel of the day.

Thank you for all you did and said
to ease the weight for me.
Never intruding, but there in the
background helping quietly.

Thank you not only for sympathy
in times of grief and stress;
But for all you have meant to me
in terms of happiness.

Many a lovely day we've known
and many a laugh we've had.
Thank you for being the kind of friend
That shared the good and bad.

A Parent Talks To A Child Before The First Game

This is your first game, my child.
Make Sure you have fun.
I hope you win for your sake, not mine.
Because winning's good. It's a great feeling.
Like the whole world is yours.
But, it passes, this feeling.
And what lasts is what you've learned.

And what you learn about is life.
That's what a sport is all about, Life.
The whole thing is played out in an afternoon.
The happiness of life. The miseries. The joys and the heartbreaks.

There's no telling what'll turn up.
There's no telling whether they'll take you out in the first five minutes or
whether you'll stay for the long haul.

There's no telling how you'll do.
You might be a hero or you might be absolutely nothing.
There's just no telling.
Too much depends on chance.
On how the ball bounces.
I'm not talking about the game, my child.
I'm talking about life.

But, it's life that the game is all about.
Just as I said.

Because every game is life.
And life is a game.
A serious game. Dead serious.

But, that's what you do with serious things.
You do your best. You take what comes and you run with it.

Winning is fun. Sure.
But winning is not the point.
Wanting to win is the point.
Not giving up is the point.
Never being satisfied with what you've done is the point.
Never letting up is the point.
Never letting anyone down is the point.

Play to win. Sure.
But lose like a champion.
Because it's not winning that counts.
What counts is trying.

The Great Game

Football's a match made in heaven
Which is fan-tastic news for me
And heaven's a level playing field
Where anyone can kick off for free

The referee needs no introduction
Or whistle for a foul blow
When God raises his eyebrows
None argue with the penalty or throw

The transfer window never closes
As new players arrive all the time
There's always a top team to play on
As for the kit, I just wish I'd brought mine

We kick off side by side in a minute
Cheered by old family, teammates and friends
Football's really a blast in heaven
After your first whistle the matches never end

Sea Fever

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

John Masefield

Crossing the Bar

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.
Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness or farewell,
When I embark;
For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

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 glints on snow,
I am the sun 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 circling flight.
I am the soft star-shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there; I did not die.*

Mary Frye, who was living in Baltimore at the time, wrote the poem in 1932. She had never written any poetry, but the plight of a young German Jewish woman, Margaret Schwarzkopf, who was staying with her and her husband, inspired the poem.

Margaret Schwarzkopf had been concerned about her mother, who was ill in Germany, but she had been warned not to return home because of increasing anti-Semitic unrest. When her mother died, the heartbroken young woman told Frye that she never had the chance to “stand by my mother’s grave and shed a tear”.

Frye found herself composing a piece of verse on a brown paper shopping bag. Later she said that the words “just came to her” and expressed what she felt about life and death.

Do Not Think Of Me and Weep1

*Do not think of me and weep,
I'm always here; I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow,
I am the diamond glints on snow,
I am the sun 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 circling flight.
I am the soft star-shine at night.
Do not think of me and cry,
I'm always here; I did not die.*

The second version is one that a family and I wrote together – they were uncomfortable with the word grave. The result is a poem that perfectly captures the idea that we never lose the people we love – they are around us everywhere.

Do Not Think of Me and Weep 2

Do not think of me and weep,
For I am all around; I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow,
The diamond glints on virgin snow,
I am the sun on ripened grain,
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am that swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circling flight.
I am the soft star-shine at night.
Do not think of me and mourn,
Because I am with you all in each new dawn.

I am with you still - I do not sleep

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 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 sweet 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.

[Go to contents](#)

Native American

Native American Prayer for Serenity

God, grant me the strength
of eagle wings,
the faith and courage
to fly to new heights,
and the wisdom
to rely on His spirit to carry me there.

Great Wings

I fly high above the mountains riding on the swift air currents,
gently gliding without a ripple on the lake of the sky.
The warmth of the sun penetrates my powerful body
and warms my beating heart as the cool and refreshing air
rushes at every motion of my wings.
Higher and higher I fly, the light misty clouds surround me,
enveloping my very being, guided only by the thermals of the heart.
Higher and higher I fly, what is behind me is now gone,
but the clarity of what is above and below me pierces my soul with vibrance.
I ascend to the stars on the great wings of love.

Native American

I am there

I am the breeze that kisses your cheek.
I am the sun that warms your face.
When you look at the purple evening sky, it is me.
When you see a majestic mountain, it is me.
When the birds sweetly sing, it is my voice.
When the water gently laps against the shore, it is my heartbeat.
I am the green grass against your feet.
I am the refreshing shade of summer.
In the stars, you see my eyes.
In the blue sky, you see my body.
Feel the air that surrounds you, I am there.
Feel the love in your heart, I am there.

Do not weep for me for I have not gone.

Do not weep for me for I have not gone.
I am the wind that shakes the mighty Oak.
I am the gentle rain that falls upon your face.
I am the spring flower that pushes through the dark earth.
I am the chuckling laughter of the mountain stream.
Do not weep for me for I have not gone.
I am the song that will never end.
I am the love of family and friend.
I am the child who has come to rest
In the arms of the Father who knows him best.
When you see the sunset fair,
I am the scented evening air.
I am the joy of a task well done.
I am the glow of the setting sun.
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!

Wilbur Skeels

Success

He has achieved success, who has lived well,
laughed often and loved much.
Who has gained the respect of intelligent men
and the love of little children.
Who has filled his niche and accomplished his task.
Who has left the world better than he found it;
whether by an improved poppy,
a perfect poem, or a rescued soul.
Who has never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty
or failed to express it.

Bessie Anderson Stanley

Play Jolly Music at my Funeral

I've taken in recent years to thinking about my funeral
And have decided to make one paramount request:
Play jolly music at that ritual.
What good does it do to heap on dirges
Or other mournful melodies?
I won't be there to be gratified by the grieving
And if I could tune in
I'd be happier to see those present have some relief.
Dixieland would be nice.
Joplin would be fine.
Something by Fats Waller would certainly do.
Those early jazzmen knew what they were up to
When they set about making funeral marches swing.
So swing me away, please, with a rousing tune.

Richard Greene (1918-1985)

You Left Quietly

You left quietly without a fuss
You always had a smile to share
A laugh, a joke
A time to care
A wonderful nature
Warm and true
These are the memories
We have of you.

A beautiful life
Came to an end
You died as you lived
Everyone's friend
You gave us years of happiness
Then sorrow came with tears
You left us lovely memories
We will treasure through the years.

*"Those we love don't go away,
They walk beside us every day,
Unseen, unheard, but always near,
Still loved, still missed, and very dear."*

*"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."*

The set of poems work well regardless of a person's actual love of gardening. The 'parent' version has been used at services where the remaining parent has passed away but their children want to make a statement about the esteem that they are both held in.

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 a 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, she knew we'd need
To stand up strong and tough.

Her constant good example,
Always taught us right from wrong;
Markers for our pathway
To last our whole life long.

We are our Mother's garden,
We are her legacy.
And we hope today she feels our love,
For her eternally.

My Mother Kept A Garden

My Mother kept a garden.
A garden of the heart;
She planted all the good things,
That gave my life it's start.

She turned me to the sunshine,
And encouraged me to dream:
Fostering and nurturing
The seeds of self-esteem.

And when the winds and rains came,
She protected me enough;
But not too much, she knew I'd need
To stand up strong and tough.

Her constant good example,
Always taught me right from wrong;
Markers for my pathway
To last my whole life long

I am my Mother's garden,
I am her legacy.
And I hope today she feels my love,
For her eternally.

Our Parents Kept a Garden

Our Parents kept a garden.
A garden of the heart;
They planted all the good things,
That gave our lives a start.

They 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,
They protected us enough;
But not too much, they knew we'd need
To stand up strong and tough.

Their constant good example,
Always taught us right from wrong;
Markers for our pathway
To last our whole life long.

We are our Parent's garden,
We are their legacy.
And we hope today they feel our love,
For them eternally.

Grandma

Grandma, you were just a girl,
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 'Grandma',
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 Grandma, and as Friend.

Dick Underwood

Grandad

Grandad was gentle,
And Grandad was kind,
Someone you could talk too,
Say what's on your mind.

Patient and mellow,
And honest and true,
A man for all seasons,
For me and for you.

Grandad understood,
And Grandad knew best,
To know him and love him,
I really was blessed.

With patience and time,
He gave his advice,
And he didn't condemn,
Or say there's a price.

Grandad I'll miss you,
I'm feeling bereft,
If only I'd made more,
Of time you had left.

I'll live as you taught,
And I'll honour your name,
I'll live my life for you,
Till we meet again.

So I'll take on your patience,
I'll be honest and true,
As a living memorial,
Grandad I love you.

Dick Underwood

Dad Always Said

Dad always said, "I would have done,
So many things you see.
There were many many people,
That I would rather be.

I dream of flying spaceships,
And flying to the moon,
But I never managed it,
Perhaps was born too soon.

I dream of being famous,
Of wealth and money too,
But I never really made it,
My name was simply 'Who?'"

Dad always said, "I would have done".
But to me he always did.
He always said, "I love you".
And I know he always did.

He cared and he provided,
The rock on which I stand.
I'm here today to tell you,
That he was always grand.

He may have not achieved his dream,
of fame and wealth untold.
But he gave to us his family,
A heart just filled with gold.

He always said, "I would have done".
But he fulfilled his dream.
He lived to his potential,
We hold him in esteem.

He made us into dreamers,
With walls that cannot hold.
He helped us find potential,
A truth that must be told.

His life our inspiration,
His words are what we talk.
Our lives are his footsteps,
And in his shoes we walk.

Dick Underwood

In the foreword to the 2008 edition of her book *WITH THESE HANDS*, Pam Ayres writes that something unexpected has happened, 'one of the poems ... seems to have become popular at wedding receptions.' Pam may be interested to know that I have occasionally been asked to read one of her poems at a funeral ceremony. Many people say to me about the deceased, 'She wasn't really a poetry kind of person.' And then with a smile they add, 'Except for Pam Ayres – of course!'

So here's one of my favourites, for all the mums who are gone but not forgotten.

With These Hands

With these hands so soft and clean,
On which I stroke the Vaseline,
I soothe the fever, cool the heat,
Lift verrucas out of feet,
Slap the plasters on the knees,
Dig the garden, prune the trees,
And if it doesn't work at all,
I throw the mower at the wall.
With these hands I crack the eggs,
Floss my teeth, shave my legs,
Write the cheques, count the fivers,
Make rude signs at piggish drivers,
Clean the goldfish, light the fires,
Pump up half a dozen tyres,
Feed the hamster, worm the dog
And decorate the Yuletide log.
With these hands I block the lens
When taking photos of my friends,
This is Mary, this is Fred,
See their eyeballs all gone red.
With them I gesticulate,
I wag a finger, say, 'You're late!'
Throw them up, say, "Don't ask me!"
And, 'What's that in your hand? Let's see!'

With these hands, I fondly make,
A brontosaurus birthday cake,
I'm sorry for the shape it's in,

But half of it stuck in the tin.
I pop the corn, I pick the mix,
I whack the cricket ball for six,
I organise the party game,
And clean up things too vile to name.
No pair of jeans do I refuse,
No Levis, Wranglers or FUs,
I wash them fast, I mend them quick,
I sew through denim hard and thick,
For no repair job makes me frown,
I take them up, I let them down,
I do the fly, I do the rip,
I do the knee, I do the zip.
And with these hands I dab the eyes,
Officiate at fond goodbyes,
As in the earth we gravely dig
The late lamented guinea pig.
I bow my head, cross my chest,
And lay his furry soul to rest,
Reflecting that, on many a day,
I could have helped him on his way.
I greet the folks who bang the door,
Fill the mouths that shout for more,
Scrape the trainers free of muck,
Gut the fish and stuff the duck,
I cart the shopping, heave the coal,
Stick the plunger down the bowl,
Take foreign bodies from the eye
And with these hands I wave
Goodbye.

Pam Ayres

Reproduced by kind permission of Pam Ayres, from her book, WITH THESE HANDS, published by Orion Books.

**To be by a lake*

To be by a lake, with rod and line,
Any time of day, suits me just fine,
To see the silent mist, of a day just begun,
Or watch the rays of light, from the setting sun.

To relax and enjoy Mother Nature's ways,
What better way to spend your leisure days,
The lapping of the water, stirred by the breeze,
The leaves as they dance high in the trees.

When finally it's time, and you must go,
Stop and take just one last look,
It matters not that no fish took your hook,
You've enjoyed the day, the weather was fine,
You've been by a lake, with rod and line.

David Spall (1941 - 2012)



Fisher of Men

Beyond the clouds, beside a pool, an angel bides his time,
So patient, pure and peaceful, he casts afar his line
Baited with his love, enough for every one,
He simply waits, waits and smiles beneath the endless sun.
It's not the ones he catches - for these shall know his love,
But those who slip away, not knowing that above
Another world is waiting; those who seek shall find
And sit beside this fisher man, and know true peace of mind.

The Angler's Wish

I in these flowery meads would be:
These crystal streams should solace me;
To whose harmonious bubbling noise
I with my Angle would rejoice:
Sit here, and see the turtle-dove
Court his chaste mate to acts of love:

Or, on that bank, feel the west wind
Breathe health and plenty: please my mind,
To see sweet dew-drops kiss these flowers,
And then washed off by April showers:
Here, hear my Kenna sing a song;
There, see a blackbird feed her young.

Or a leverock build her nest:
Here, give my weary spirits rest,
And raise my low-pitch'd thoughts above
Earth, or what poor mortals love:
Thus, free from law-suits and the noise
Of princes' courts, I would rejoice:

Or, with my Bryan, and a book,
Loiter long days near Shawford-brook;
There sit by him, and eat my meat,
There see the sun both rise and set:
There bid good morning to next day;
There meditate my time away,
And Angle on; and beg to have
A quiet passage to a welcome grave.

from *The Compleat Angler* by Izaak Walton 1653

Angler's Prayer

*God grant that I may fish for carp until my dying day:
And when I come to my last cast
I'll then most humbly pray
When, in the Lord's safe landing net I'm perfectly asleep
That in His mercy I'll be judged
As good enough to keep.*

A Sailor's Prayer

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
Grant no other sailor take
My shoes and socks before I wake.
Lord guard me in my slumber
And keep my hammock on its number.
May no clues nor lashings break
And let me down before I wake.
Keep me safely in thy sight
And grant no fire drill tonight.
And in the morning let me wake,
Breathing scents of sirloin steak.
God protect me in my dreams
And make this better than it seems.

Grant the time may swiftly fly
When myself shall rest on high.
In a snowy feather bed,
Where I long to rest my head,
Far away from all the scenes
And the smell of half-done beans.
Take me back into the land
Where they don't scrub down with sand,
Where no Demon Typhoon blows,
Where the women wash the clothes.
God thou knowest all my woes,
Feed me in my dying throes.
Take me back I'll promise then
Never to leave home again.



The Ship

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 Charles Henry Brent, American Missionary Bishop (1862 - 1926)

I'm Fine Thank You

There is nothing the matter with me
I'm as healthy as can be.
I have arthritis in both my knees
And when I talk, I talk with a wheeze,

My pulse is weak and my blood is thin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.
Arch supports I have for my feet,
Or I wouldn't be able to go on the street.

Sleep is denied me night after night,
But every morning I find I'm all right,
My memory is failing, my head's in a spin
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

The moral is this - as my tale I unfold,
That for you and me who are growing old,
It's better to say, "I'm fine" with a grin,
Than to let folks know the shape we're in.

How do I know that my youth is all spent?
Well my 'get up and go' has got up and went.
But I don't really mind when I think with a grin,
Of all the grand places 'my get up' has been.

Old age is golden, I've heard it said,
But sometimes I wonder as I get into bed,
With my ears in the drawer, my teeth in the cup,
My eyes on the table until I wake up.

Ere sleep overtakes me, I think to myself
Is there anything else I could lay on the shelf?
When I was young, my slippers were red;
I could kick my heels right over my head.

When I got older, my slippers were blue;
But still I could dance the whole night through.
But now I am old, my slippers are black;
I walk to the store and puff my way back.

I get up each day and dust off my wits,
And pick up the paper and read the 'obits'.
If my name is still missing, I know I'm not dead -
So I have a good breakfast and go back to bed.

Poor But Blessed In The Old Days

We met and we married a long time ago
We worked for long hours when wages were low
No TV, no wireless, no bath – times were hard
Just a cold water tap and a walk in the yard.

No holiday abroad, no carpets on floors
We had coal in the fire, and we didn't lock doors
Our children arrived – no pill in those days
And we bought them all up without any state aid.

They were safe going out to play in the park
And old folks could go for a walk in the dark
No Valium, no drugs, and no LSD
We cured most of our ills with a good cup of tea

No vandals, no muggings, there was nothing to rob
We felt we were rich with a couple of bob.
People were happy in those far away days
More kind and caring in so many ways

Milkman and paperboy would whistle and sing
A night at the pictures was our one mad fling
We all got our share of trouble and strife
We just had to face it – that's the pattern of life

Now I'm alone, looking back through the years
I don't think of the bad times, trouble and tears
I remember the blessings, our home and our love
And we shared them together
I thank God above

Life

Life is an opportunity, benefit from it.

Life is beauty, admire it.

Life is bliss, taste it.

Life is a dream, realise it.

Life is a challenge, meet it.

Life is a duty, complete it.

Life is a game, play it.

Life is love, enjoy it.

Life is mystery, know it.

Life is a promise, fulfil it.

Life is sorrow, overcome it.

Life is a song, sing it.

Life is a struggle, accept it.

Life is tragedy, confront it.

Life is an adventure, dare it.

Life is luck, make it.

Life is too precious, do not destroy it.

Life is life, fight for it.

Mother Teresa

Death Is Nothing At All

Death is nothing at all.
I have only slipped away to 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, and think of me. Pray for me.
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was.

Let it be spoken without effect.
Without the trace of a shadow on it.

Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same that it ever was.
There is absolute 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 Holland

[Go to contents](#)

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 birth.

Not, what was his church, nor what was his creed?
But had he befriended those really in need?
Was he ever ready, with word 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

Remember Me, But Don't Be Sad

Remember me, but don't be sad,
Laugh about the times we've had.
Remember me, but not with tears
Talk about our bygone years.
I'm still with you, just out of sight.
I am the darkness, I am the light.

In times of trouble, I'll hold your hand
I'll try to guide you, you understand.
Don't ever think that I'm not there,
My spirit's alive. I'm everywhere.
I was ready to go when the Lord called my name.
I followed the path, I felt no pain.

It was a relief to walk through heaven's doors
I am at peace so rest assured,
We'll be together again one day,
I was needed first to light the way.
So please don't cry, you must not weep.
There is no death, just peaceful sleep.

If I Should Die

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

The Dash

Please look on-line

<https://thedashpoem.com/>

Linda Ellis copyright 1996

*Love doesn't end with dying
Or leave with the last breath.
For someone you have loved dearly
love goes on forever*

Dust If You Must

by Rose Milligan

Dust if you must, but wouldn't it be better
To paint a picture, or write a letter,
Bake a cake, or plant a seed;
Ponder the difference between want and need?

Dust if you must, but there's not much time,
With rivers to swim, and mountains to climb;
Music to hear, and books to read;
Friends to cherish, and life to lead.

Dust if you must, but the world's out there
With the sun in your eyes, and the wind in your hair;
A flutter of snow, a shower of rain,
This day will not come around again.

Dust if you must, but bear in mind,
Old age will come and it's not kind.
And when you go (and go you must)
You, yourself, will make more dust.

Footprints in the Sand

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord.

Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky. In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints, other times there were one set of footprints.

This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life, when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat, I could see only one set of footprints.

So I said to the Lord, 'You promised me Lord, that if I followed you, you would walk with me always. But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life there have only been one set of footprints in the sand.

Why, when I needed you most, you have not been there for me?'

The Lord replied, 'The times when you have seen only one set of footprints in the sand, is when I carried you.'

Mary Stevenson, 1936

Footprints

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 belonging 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 of 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 most you would leave me.'

The LORD replied, 'my precious, precious child, I Love you and I 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.'

Carolyn Carty, 1963

Footprints

Also Known As "*I Had a Dream*"

One night I dreamed a dream. 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.

When the last scene of my life shot before me I looked back at the footprints in the sand. There was only one set of footprints. I realised that this was at the lowest and saddest times of my life. This always bothered me and I questioned the Lord about my dilemma.

"Lord, You told me when I decided to follow You, You would walk and talk with me all the way. But I'm aware that during the most troublesome times of my life there is only one set of footprints. I just don't understand why, when I need You most, You leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you, never, ever, during your trials and testings. When you saw only one set of footprints, It was then that I carried you."

Margaret Fishback Powers, 1964

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.

God Saw You Getting Tired 1

God saw you getting tired
and a cure was not to be
so he put his arms around you
and whispered, "Come to Me"

With tearful eyes we watched you
and saw you pass away
and although we loved you dearly
we could not make you stay.

A Golden heart stopped beating
hard working hands at rest.
God broke our hearts to prove to us
He only takes the best

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 your 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 imposters 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 breath 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, author and poet (1865 - 1936)

Stop All The Clocks

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 for ever: 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

When I'm Gone

*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*

A Reflection on an Autumn Day

I took up a handful of grain and let it slip flowing through my fingers, and I said to myself

This is what it is all about. There is no longer any room for pretence. At harvest time the essence is revealed - the straw and chaff are set aside, they have done their job. The grain alone matters - sacks of pure gold.

So it is when a person dies the essence of that person is revealed. At the moment of death a person's character stands out happy for the person who has forged it well over the years. Then it will not be the great achievement that will matter, nor how much money or possessions a person has amassed. These like the straw and the chaff, will be left behind. It is what he has made of himself that will matter. Death can take away from us what we have, but it cannot rob us of who we are.

Woodland Burial by Pam Ayres

Don't lay me in some gloomy churchyard shaded by a wall
Where the dust of ancient bones has spread a dryness over all,
Lay me in some leafy loam where, sheltered from the cold
Little seeds investigate and tender leaves unfold.
There kindly and affectionately, plant a native tree
To grow resplendent before God and hold some part of me.
The roots will not disturb me as they wend their peaceful way
To build the fine and bountiful, from closure and decay.
To seek their small requirements so that when their work is done
I'll be tall and standing strongly in the beauty of the sun.

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.

The Life That I Have (sometimes referred to as Yours) is a short poem written by Leo Marks and used as a poem code in the Second World War.

In the war, famous poems were used to encrypt messages. This was, however, found to be insecure because enemy cryptanalysts were able to locate the original from published sources. Marks countered this by using his own written creations. The Life That I Have was an original poem composed on Christmas Eve 1943 and was originally written by Marks in memory of his girlfriend Ruth, who had just died in a plane crash in Canada. On 24 March 1944, the poem was issued by Marks to Violette Szabo, a French agent of Special Operations Executive who was eventually captured, tortured and killed by the Nazis.

It was made famous by its inclusion in the 1958 movie about Szabo, *Carve Her Name with Pride*, where the poem was said to be the creation of Violette's husband Etienne. (Marks allowed it to be used under the condition that its author not be identified.)

We Will Remember Him

In the rising of the sun and it's going down,
In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,
In the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring.
In the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer,
In the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn.
At the beginning of the year and when it ends,
When we are weary and in need of strength,
When we are lost and sick of heart,
When we have joys and special celebrations we yearn to share,
So long as we live, he too shall live, for he is part of us.
We Will Remember



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 is 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 very near.

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

Feel no guilt in Laughter

Feel no guilt in laughter, I know how much you care.
Feel no sorrow in a smile that I am not here to share.

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

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

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

That brings me back as clearly as though I am still here,
And fills you with the feeling that I am always very near.

For if you keep those moments, we will never be apart
And I will live forever locked safely within your heart.

Don't cry for me

Don't cry for me now I have died, for I'm still here I'm by your side.
My body's gone but my soul's is here, please don't shed another tear.
I am still here I'm all around, only my body lies in the ground.
I am the snowflake that kisses your nose, I am the frost, that nips your toes.
I am the sun, bringing you light, I am the star, shining so bright.
I am the rain, refreshing the earth, I am the laughter, I am the mirth.
I am the bird, up in the sky, I am the cloud, that's drifting by.
I am the thoughts, inside your head, While I'm still there, I can't be dead.

Look For Me In Rainbows

Time for me to go now, I won't say goodbye;
Look for me in rainbows, way up in the sky.
In the morning sunrise when all the world is new,
Just look for me and love me, as you know I loved you.
Time for me to leave you, I won't say goodbye;
Look for me in rainbows, high up in the sky.
In the evening sunset, when all the world is through,
Just look for me and love me, and I'll be close to you.
It won't be forever, the day will come and then
My loving arms will hold you, when we meet again.
Time for us to part now, we won't say goodbye;
Look for me in rainbows, shining in the sky.
Every waking moment, and all your whole life through
Just look for me and love me, as you know I loved you.
Just wish me to be near you,
And I'll be there with you.

Breath

*Life is not measured by the breaths we take,
but by the moments that take our breath away.*

The Last Hero (Discworld 27)

By Terry Pratchett

"Ah. well, life goes on," people say when someone dies. But from the point of view of the person who has just died, it doesn't. It's the universe that goes on. Just as the deceased was getting the hang of everything it's all whisked away, by illness or accident or, in one case, a cucumber. Why this has to be is one of the imponderables of life, in the face of which people either start to pray ... or become really, really angry.

Some People

Some people can't help making a difference in our lives
By simply being who they are.

By simply being who they are they make the World...

A little brighter
A little warmer
A little more gentle.

And when they're gone, we realise how lucky we are to have known them

He Is Gone

You can shed tears that 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 all that he has left

Your heart can be empty because you can't see him
Or it 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 him and 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 would want:
smile, open your eyes love and go on.

David Harkins

You Can Shed Tears

You can shed tears that I've gone

or you can smile because I've lived.

You can close your eyes and pray that I'll come back
or you can open your eyes and see all I've left.

Your heart can be empty because you can't see me
or you can be full of the love we shared.

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

You can remember me and only that I've gone
or you can cherish my memory and let it live on.

You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back
or you can do what I'd want you to do:

Smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

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

Parents

This is an unusual reading because it is appropriate for everyone at a service who has lost a mother or father.

Our parents cast long shadows over our lives. When we grow up we imagine we can walk into the sun, free of them. We don't realise until it's too late that we have no choice in the matter, they're always ahead of us.

We carry them within us all our lives, in the shape of our face, the way we walk, the sound of our voice, our skin, our hair, our hands, our heart. We try all our lives to separate ourselves from them and only when they pass away do we find we are indivisible.

We grow to expect that our parents, like the weather, will always be with us. Then they go, leaving a mark like a handprint on glass or a wet kiss on a rainy day, and with their passing we are no longer children.

Robert Eyre

"Desiderata"

"Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant, they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit.

If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism. Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love, for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is perennial as the grass. Take kindly to the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.

But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labours and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.

Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

Max Ehrmann

The Traveller

From city, town or village green
Under the stars where life is free
Come my friend, yoke up your horse
Let's hitch up and then go forth

Oh! What a joy it is to roam
And have a vardo for a home
A home on wheels is my delight
Pulled by a horse with all its might

Doing hard work for little pay
To help us get through every day
Some days here, some days there
Living life without a care

From dawn to dusk we work our way
Over hills and dales and far away
When sitting by the firelight glow
Thank God for what we Travellers call home

With horse and cart, love and care
We'll work our way to Appleby Fair
This ancient town of Travellers' joy
Where old friends meet, both man and boy

With whippet, lurcher or greyhound
Through the fields we hunt around
If we catch a rabbit, it's a winner
It means we have tomorrow's dinner

For day by day as we grow old
A Traveller's life is just like gold
Like trinket, jewel or precious stone
Life is sweet if you can roam

When tired and weary and past my best
And God calls me on to take my rest
I hope in Heaven I can roam
And have a vardo for my home

Then when in death my living soul
Will never reach the end of the road
As I lie and wait for God to say
"Come on chaver, it's Judgement Day"



Going home

Going home, going home
I'm a-going home.
Quiet like, some still day,
I'm just going home.
It's not far, just close by,
Through an open door.
Work all done, care laid by,
Never fear no more.
Mother's there expecting me
Father's waiting too
Lots of folk gathered there,
All the friends I know,
All the friends I know.

If Tomorrow Never Comes

Tomorrow is not promised to anyone, young or old alike,
and today may be the last chance to hold your loved one tight.
So if you are waiting for tomorrow, why not do it today?
For if tomorrow never comes, you will surely regret the day,
you did not take the extra time for a smile, a hug, or a kiss.
So hold your loved ones close today, whisper in their ear.
Tell them how much you love them
and you'll always hold them dear.
And if tomorrow never comes,
you will have no regrets about today.

Your Mother Is Always With You.

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 and perfume that she wore. She's the cool hand on your brow when you're not feeling well. She's your breath in the air on a cold winter's day. She is the sound of the rain that lulls you to sleep. The colours of a rainbow. She is Christmas morning. Your Mother lives inside your laughter. And she's crystallized in every tear drop. A mother shows every emotion..... happiness, sadness, fear, jealousy, love, hate, anger, helplessness, excitement, joy, sorrow..... and all the while, hoping and praying you will only know the good feelings in life. She's the place you came from. She is your first home, and 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!

A Mother's love

A Mother's love is something
that no one can explain,
It is made of deep devotion
and of sacrifice and pain,
It is endless and unselfish
and enduring come what may
For nothing can destroy it
or take that love away . . .
It is patient and forgiving
when all others are forsaking,
And it never fails or falters
even though the heart is breaking . . .

It believes beyond believing
when the world around condemns,
And it glows with all the beauty
of the rarest, brightest gems . . .
It is far beyond defining,
it defies all explanation,
And it still remains a secret
like the mysteries of creation . . .
A many splendoured miracle
man cannot understand
And another wondrous evidence
of God's tender guiding hand.

Helen Steiner Rice

The Last Hero (Discworld 27)

In the study of his dark house on the edge of Time, Death looked at the wooden box.

PERHAPS I SHALL TRY ONE MORE TIME, he said.

He reached down and lifted up a small kitten, patted it on the head, lowered it gently into the box, and closed the lid.

THE CAT DIES WHEN THE AIR RUNS OUT?

'I suppose it might, sir,' said Albert, his manservant. 'But I don't reckon that's the point. If I understand it right, you don't know if the cat's dead or alive until you look at it.'

THINGS WILL HAVE COME TO A PRETTY PASS, ALBERT, IF I DID NOT KNOW WHETHER A THING WAS DEAD OR ALIVE WITHOUT HAVING TO GO AND LOOK.

'Er... The way the theory goes, sir, it's the *act* of lookin' that determines if it's alive or not.'

Death looked hurt. ARE YOU SUGGESTING I WILL KILL THE CAT JUST BY LOOKING AT IT?

'It's not quite like that, sir.'

I MEAN, IT'S NOT AS IF I MAKE FACES OR ANYTHING.

'To be honest with you, sir, I don't think even the wizards understand the uncertainty business,' said Albert. 'We didn't truck with that class of stuff in my day. If you weren't certain, you were dead.' [...]

He opened the box and took out the kitten. It stared at him with the normal mad amazement of kittens everywhere.

I DON'T HOLD WITH CRUELTY TO CATS, said Death, putting it gently on the floor.

Terry Pratchett

I thank thee God, that I have lived

I thank thee God, that I have lived
In this great world and known its many joys:
The songs of birds, the strongest sweet scent of hay,
And cooling breezes in the secret dusk;
The flaming sunsets at the close of day,
Hills and the lovely, heather-covered moors;
Music at night, and the moonlight on the sea,
The beat of waves upon the rocky shore
And wild white spray, flung high in ecstasy;
The faithful eyes of dogs, and treasured books,
The love of Kin and fellowship of friends
And all that makes life dear and beautiful.
I thank Thee too, that there has come to me
A little sorrow and sometimes defeat,
A little heartache and the loneliness
That comes with parting and the words 'Good-bye';
Dawn breaking after weary hours of pain,
When I discovered that night's gloom must yield
And morning light break through to me again.
Because of these and other blessings poured
Unasked upon my wondering head,
Because I know that there is yet to come
An even richer and more glorious life,
And most of all, because Thine only Son
Once sacrificed life's loveliness for me,
I thank Thee, God, that I have lived.
Elizabeth Craven, writer and socialite (1750 - 1828)

A Question

A voice said, Look me in the stars
And tell me truly, men of earth,
If all the soul-and-body scars
Were not too much to pay for birth.

Robert Frost

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 on again,
and though we wish it could have stayed,
we feel so lucky to have seen it."*



At every turning of my life

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.

Gitanjali Ghei (1961 – 1977)

When God Saw You Getting Tired 2

When God saw you getting tired And a cure was not to be He put his arms around you And whispered come to me	And when we saw you sleeping So peaceful and free from pain We wouldn't wish you back To suffer that again
He didn't like what you went through And he gave you rest His garden must be beautiful He only takes the best	Today we say goodbye And as you take your final rest That garden must be beautiful Because you are one of the best.

When I'm gone

Release me, let me go.

I have so many things to see and do.
You mustn't tie yourself to me with tears,
Be happy that we had so many years.
I gave you my love and you can only guess,
How much you gave me in happiness.
I thank you for the love you have shown,
But now it's time I travelled on alone.
So grieve awhile for me, if grieve you must
then let your grief be comforted by trust.
It's only for a while 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 say, welcome home.

PRAYERS

A Celtic Blessing

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always on your back,
May the sun shine warmly upon your face,
And the rain fall softly on your fields,
And, until we meet again,
May the Lord hold you in the hollow of His hand.

The Serenity Prayer

God, grant us the...
Serenity to accept things we cannot change,
Courage to change the things we can, and the
Wisdom to know the difference
Patience for the things that take time
Appreciation for all that we have, and
Tolerance for those with different struggles
Freedom to live beyond the limitations of our past ways, the
Ability to feel your love for us and our love for each other and the
Strength to get up and try again even when we feel it is hopeless.

Reinhold Niebuhr

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen

The Lord bless you
and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face upon you
and give you peace.

Judaism 6:24-6

Reading: John 14: 1-7, 27

Jesus spoke to his disciples. 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?'

Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'

'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.'

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still water. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

These words are a reminder that there is a time and a place for everything that we do in life. When we're in our saddest moments, have hope because there will be a time for laughter again.

Ecclesiastes 3

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?

I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.

He hath made everything beautiful in his time:

also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end

The Chain

We didn't know that morning,
God was going to call your name.
In life we loved you dearly,
In death we do the same.

It broke our hearts to lose you,
You did not go alone.
For part of us went with you,
The day God called you home.

You left us beautiful memories,
Your love is still our guide,
And though we cannot see you,
You are always by our side.

Our family chain is broken,
And nothing seems the same,
But as God calls us one by one,
The chain will link again.

The Broken Chain

We little knew that day
God would call your name.
In life we loved you dearly.
In death we do the same.

It broke our hearts to lose you
but you didn't go alone,
for a part of us went with you
the day God called you home.

We're left with loving memories
of the time we had with you,
and feel your love around us
in everything we do.

Our family chain is broken
and our lives are not the same,
But as God calls us one by one
the chain will link again.

Golden Memories

They say memories are golden
well maybe that is true.
We never wanted memories,
We only wanted you.

A million times we needed you,
a million times we cried.
If love alone could have saved you
you never would have died.

In life we loved you dearly,
In death we love you still.
In our hearts you hold a place
no one could ever fill.

If tears could build a stairway
and heartache make a lane,
We'd walk the path to heaven
and bring you back again.

Our family chain is broken,
and nothing seems the same.
But as God calls us one by one,
the chain will link again.

*"As I stood in the wilderness
Not knowing which way to roam,
My blessed Jesus saw me
And came and took me home"*

**Smile - A thought for today*

When you get up in the morning
And you're feeling rather glum,
Just force a little smile
You will find it so much fun.

Most people will return the smile,
A smile that is so true.
All because that little smile
You brought from home with you.

And when you're in your workplace,
Or walking round the town -
Just smile at other people
And take away their frown.

And when you go back home again
Don't throw the smile away.
Put it at your bedside
To use another day.

Peter Fauch 1938 - 2014

Where do they go to?

Where do they go to, the people who leave?
Are they around us, in the cool evening breeze?
Do they still hear us, and watch us each day?
I'd like you to think of them with us that way.
Where do they go to, when no longer here?
I think that they stay with us, calming our fear
Loving us always, holding our hands
Walking beside us, on grass or on sand.
Where do they go to, well it's my belief
They watch us and help us to cope with our grief
They comfort and stay with us, through each of our days
Guiding us always through life's mortal maze.

No Man is an Island

John Donne 1572 - 1631

No man is an island entire of itself; every man
is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;
if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe
is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as
well as any manner of thy friends or of thine
own were; any man's death diminishes me,
because I am involved in mankind.
And therefore never send to know for whom
the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

Let Me Die, Working

Let me die, working.
Still tackling plans unfinished, tasks undone!
Clean to its end, swift may my race be run.
No laggard steps, no faltering, no shirking;
Let me die, working!

Let me die, thinking.
Let me fare forth still with an open mind,
Fresh secrets to unfold, new truths to find,
My soul undimmed, alert, no question blinking;
Let me die, thinking!

Let me die, laughing.
No sighing o'er past sins; they are forgiven.
Spilled on this earth are all the joys of Heaven;
The Wine of life, the cup of mirth quaffing.
Let me die, laughing!
Samuel Hall Young (1847-1927)

Don't Think of Him as Gone Away

Ellen Brenneman

Don't think of him as gone away –
his journey's just begun;
life holds so many facets –
this earth is only one.

Just think of him as resting
from the sorrows and the tears
in a place of warmth and comfort
where there are no days and years.

Think how he must be wishing
that we could know, today,
how nothing but our sadness
can really pass away.

And think of him as living
in the hearts of those he touched...
for nothing loved is ever lost –
and he was loved so much.

Remember me When I'm Gone Away

Christina Rossetti

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the 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 by day
You tell me of our future that you planned:
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 you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

Look Forward With Hope, Not Backward With Regret

The Cord

We are connected,
My child and I, by
An invisible cord
Not seen by the eye.

It's not like a cord
That connects us 'til birth
This cord can't be seen
By any on Earth.

This cord does its work
Right from the start.
It binds us together
Attached to my heart.

I know that it's there
Though no one can see
The invisible cord
From my child to me.

The strength of this cord
Is hard to describe.
It can't be destroyed,
It can't be denied.

It's stronger than any cord
Man could create.
It withstands the test,
Can hold any weight.

And though you are gone,
Though you're not here with me,
The cord is still there
But no one can see.

It pulls at my heart.
I am bruised... I am sore,
But this cord is my lifeline
As never before.

Alzheimer's or Dementia

If someone has had Alzheimer's it is always difficult to know what to say at their funeral. My hope is, that the following verses will help you to remember them when their mind was fit and well. The Alzheimer poem concentrates on the long period of life prior to the onset of the disease, rather than the relatively short period of time following the onset of Alzheimer's -

Dick Underwood 2010

We didn't lose you recently,
We lost you some time ago.
Although your body stayed a while,
And didn't really know.

Today, when we remember,
We'll think of all the rest.
We'll concentrate on earlier,
And remember all the best.

For in the real scheme of things,
Your illness wasn't long.
Compared to all the happiness,
You brought your whole life long.
We think of you as yesterday,

When you were fit and well.
And when we're asked about you,
It's those things that we'll tell.

And so we meet in remembrance,
Of a mind so fit and true.
We're here to pay our last respects
To say that, "We love you".



Dick Underwood

Have A Nice Day

'Help, help, ' said a man. 'I'm drowning.'
'Hang on, ' said a man from the shore.
'Help, help, ' said the man. 'I'm not clowning.'
'Yes, I know, I heard you before.
Be patient dear man who is drowning,
You, see I've got a disease.
I'm waiting for a Doctor J. Browning.
So do be patient please.'
'How long, ' said the man who was drowning. 'Will it take for the Doc to arrive?'

"Not very long, ' said the man with the disease. 'Till then try staying alive.'
'Very well, ' said the man who was drowning. 'I'll try and stay afloat.
By reciting the poems of Browning
And other things he wrote.'
'Help, help, ' said the man with the disease, 'I suddenly feel quite ill.'
'Keep calm.' said the man who was drowning, 'Breathe deeply and lie quite still.'
'Oh dear, ' said the man with the awful disease. 'I think I'm going to die.'
'Farewell, ' said the man who was drowning.
Said the man with the disease, 'goodbye.'
So the man who was drowning, drowned
And the man with the disease past away.
But apart from that,
And a fire in my flat,
It's been a very nice day.

Spike Milligan

Silly Old Baboon

There was a Baboon
Who, one afternoon,
Said "I think I will fly to the sun."
So, with two great palms
Strapped to his arms,
He started his take-off run.

Mile after mile
He galloped in style
But never once left the ground.
"You're running too slow"
Said a passing crow,
"Try reaching the speed of sound."

So he put on a spurt-
By God how it hurt!
The soles of his feet caught fire.
There were great clouds of steam
As he raced through a stream
But he still didn't get any higher.

Racing on through the night
Both his knees caught alight
And smoke billowed out from his rear.
Quick to his aid
Came a fire brigade
Who chased him for over a year.

Many moons passed by.
Did Baboon ever fly?
Did he ever get to the sun?
I've just heard today
That he's well on his way!
He'll be passing through Acton at one.

Spike Milligan

Courage - To Kill a Mockingbird

Here Atticus educates his children as to the true meaning of heroism.

“I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It's when you know you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do.”

*Harper Lee
To Kill a Mockingbird*

As We Look Back

As we look back over time
We find ourselves wondering
Did we remember to thank you enough
For all you have done for us?
For all the times you were by our sides
To help and support us
To celebrate our successes
To understand our problems
And accept our defeats?
Or for teaching us by your example,
The value of hard work, good judgement,
Courage and integrity?
We wonder if we ever thanked you
For the sacrifices you made.
To let us have the very best?
And for the simple things
Like laughter, smiles and times we shared?
If we have forgotten to show our
Gratitude enough for all the things you did,
We're thanking you now.
And we are hoping you knew all along,
How much you meant to us.

*Gone yet not forgotten,
Although we are apart,
Your spirit lives within us,
Always in our heart.*

Pardon Me for Not Getting Up

Oh dear, if you're reading this right now,
I must have given up the ghost.
I hope you can forgive me for being
Such a stiff and unwelcoming host.

Just talk amongst yourself my friends,
And share a toast or two.
For I am sure you will remember well
How I loved to drink with you.

Don't worry about mourning me,
I was never easy to offend.
Feel free to share a story at my expense
And we'll have a good laugh at the end.

Warning

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me.
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves
And satin sandals, and say we've no money for butter.
I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired
And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells
And run my stick along the public railings
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain
And pick flowers in other people's gardens
And learn to spit.
You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go
Or only bread and pickle for a week
And hoard pens and pencils and beer mats and things in boxes.
But now we must have clothes that keep us dry
And pay our rent and not swear in the street
And set a good example for the children.
We must have friends to dinner and read the papers.

But maybe I ought to practice a little now?
So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised
When suddenly I am old, and start to wear purple.

Jenny Joseph

When I'm Gone

*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 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.*

Some Folk

Pam Nelson

*Some people light up rooms with their laughter
Others can brighten the world with a smile.
Many will make you feel happy
By sitting nearby for a while.*

*Some folk can cheer up a cold day
With just a few words or a glance.
Others can make things seem better
If you just give them half of a chance.*

*But there are those whose whole life is a blessing,
Not just a moment, a smile or a word.
They make all around them feel special,
No person ignored or unheard.*

*They give all they have and then give more,
While helping somebody get through.
It's not about thanks or for mention,
It's something that's in them they do.*

*And when it's time that they sadly must leave us
We grieve ... but also we smile.
We give thanks that our lives were connected
And were held in their heart for a while.*

Remember Me 1

Margaret Mead, American writer and poet (1901 - 1978)

As you stand upon a shore gazing at a beautiful sea...

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

Remember Me.

Remember me in your heart.

Your thoughts, and 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 have gone.

Remember Me 2

Don't remember me with sadness,

Don't remember me with tears,

Remember all the laughter,

We've shared throughout the years.

Now I am contented

That my life it was worthwhile,

Knowing as I passed along the way

I made somebody smile.

When you are walking down the street

And you've got me on your mind,

I'm walking in your footsteps

Only half a step behind.

So please don't be unhappy

Just because I'm out of sight,

Remember that I'm with you

Each morning, noon and night.

Remember Me 3

by Anthony Dowson

Speak of me as you have always done.

Remember the good times, laughter and fun.

Share the happy memories we've made.

Do not let them wither or fade.

I'll be with you in the summer's sun

And when the winter's chill has come.

I'll be that voice that whispers in the breeze.

I'm peaceful now, put your mind at ease

I've rested my eyes and gone to sleep,

But memories we've shared are yours to keep.

Sometimes our final days may be a test,

But remember me when I was at my best.

Although things may not be the same,

Don't be afraid to use my name.

Let your sorrow last for a while.

Comfort each other and try to smile

I've lived a life filled with joy and fun

Live on now, make me proud of what you'll become

Remember Me 4

No pain beyond, no tears, no fear.
No thoughts of death for I'm still near.
No hugs I know, nor sweet caress,
But I'm still close to love and bless.
No quiet word, nor gentle touch,
But don't despair ~ I love you much.
No gesture kind, to show I care;
The veil's drawn, but I'm still there.
Grieve not too long ~ but look around,
In earthly things I shall be found.
A falling leaf, a growing tree,
In every breeze you will feel me.
I walk in life ~ death holds no pain.
Be reassured, we'll meet again.

Some Folk

Remembering Doreen Leitch

*Things I remember as a kid
Things we said, things we did
Like swinging on lamp posts tall and high
Flying homemade kites up in the sky
News boys calling Star, News and Standard
And Sally Armies with their banners
Mums and dads talking in doorways
These are the things I remember always
Little girls playing with skipping ropes and hoops
Boys making sparks from the studs in their boots
Going off fishing with jam jars on string
Going on church outings, oh how we would sing
Waiting and longing for school holidays
These are the things I'll remember always*

The Gardener's Morning

By Howard Dolf

*The robin's song at daybreak
Is a clarion call to me.
Get up and get out in the garden,
For the morning hours flee.*

*I cannot resist the summons,
What earnest gardener could?
For the golden hours of morning
Get into the gardener's blood.*

*The magic spell is upon me,
I'm glad that I did not wait;
For life's at its best in the morning,
As you pass through the garden gate.*

The Dash Between

Ron Tranmer©

*I stood there near the headstone
of one I loved, and cried.
Beneath his name was there engraved,
date of birth - and date he died.*

*The thought came quickly to my mind,
these years leave much unseen.
Far more meaningful to me
is the dash - which lies between.*

*The years within that little dash
live on in memory,
and represent the precious life
of one who's dear to me.*

*In time I too shall pass away
and in the ground I'll lie.
Will those I love and leave behind
stand at my grave and cry?*

*Our life here upon the earth
can end in but a flash.
Are we wisely using
the time within our dash ?*

*Do we look for opportunities
to do a kindly deed,
and show love and understanding
to those who are in need?*

*For If our hearts are full of love
throughout the time we're here,
we'll be loved by all who knew us,
and our memory they'll hold dear.*

*And there upon our headstone,
shining ever bright and bold,
that little dash between our years
will be a dash of gold.*

The Wren
Louis Tomlin

*There's a Wren which lives in our garden
He seems to have made it his home.
All the day long, he'll practice his song
And shows no inclination to roam.*

*As you watch, you can see his breast flutter
In the effort he puts in his song.
He's like a minute Pavarotti
And never a note he gets wrong.*

*The song he's continuously singing,
Is a song that doesn't need any words.
He's trying to say in his own modest way
"Look at me... I'm the King of the Birds!"*

Instructions
Arnold Crompton

*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.*

You Never Said I'm Leaving 1

*You never said I'm leaving
You never said goodbye
You were gone before we knew it
And only you know why*

*We saw the outward smile
But not your inner pain
We never ever dreamt
That you would never smile again*

*So many times we needed you
So many times we cried
If love alone could have saved you
You never would have died*

*We pray your mental anguish
Will now forever cease
And that your deep anxieties
Will be replaced by peace*

*We love you and we miss you
With every passing day
And miss the fun and happy times
We shared along the way*

*We will in time remember
The good times not the bad
We remember when you laughed with us
Not when you were sad*

*It broke our hearts to lose you
But you didn't go alone
As part of us went with you
So your never on your own*

*Our thoughts are always with you
Your place no one can fill
In life we loved you dearly
In death we love you still*

*We want to tell you something
So there won't be any doubt
You're so wonderful to think of
And so hard to live without*

Alternate version...

You Never Said I'm Leaving 2

*No one seemed to notice
What you were going through;
We all just kept on seeing
The man we wanted to.*

*If we did not see
The pain that you were in
Or ask, or offer help
Forgive us for that sin.*

*Now we know your worries
Crease your brow no more
And your spirit rests in peace
Upon that distant shore.*

*And we in turn remember
The good times, not the bad:
We remember when you laughed with us,
Not when you were sad.*

*And laugh – we laughed often
For good times there were plenty
With jokes and songs and beer and wine
And a glass that was never empty*

*Like all the best friendships
Most valued when you win them,
Our lives have been the richer
Because you have been in them.*

Tomorrow

By an unknown child in a Nazi death camp

*From tomorrow on I shall be sad.
From tomorrow on, not today, no!
Today I will be glad.
And every day, no matter how bitter it be, I will say:
From tomorrow on I shall be sad,
Not today!*

Your Mother

Irene Connor

*Although you cannot hear her voice,
Or see her smile no more,
Your mother walks beside you
Just as she did before.
She listens to your stories and
She wipes away your tears;
She wraps her arms around you
And she understands your fears.*

*It's just she isn't visible
To see with human eye,
But talk to her in silence and
Her spirit will reply.
You'll feel the love she has for you.
You'll hear her in your heart,
She's left her human body, but
Your souls will never part.*

If only I could?

*In a time of innocence, set amongst trees,
before you start thinking about the birds and the bees,*

*we bruised our flesh and skinned our knees,
as we fought our games under green canopies.*

*Soldiers we'd play and 'foxes 'n' hounds',
hiding in bushes, down flat on the ground.
Slow-worms and lizards we'd hunt without sound,
our parents would curse us for taking home what we'd found.*

*Trolleys were ridden and bikes we would race,
straining and struggling 'till you were red in the face.
We didn't want to leave there, so no time for grace,
Sunday lunch finished quickly, let's get back to that place.*

*Looking for fossils when the fields had been ploughed.
Laying head to head trying to bomb-burst a cloud.
Swinging on ropes and laughing out loud.
To stay friends forever, we all solemnly vowed.*

*But as we grew up we went our own way,
more things to learn, much less time for play,
but I know in my heart it will always stay,
when I think of those times, it brightens my day.*

*The mid-eighties winds flattened our wood,
no longer a canopy, where tall trees once stood.
I cried at their death, memories of childhood.
How I long to be back there, If only I could!*

The Gift Of Music

*She touched the ivory keys,
Each one she so gently played.
You wonder if she fully realized
The beautiful sound they made.*

*You could see it in her eyes,
The joy she got from each musical note
Playing old songs or new
Each key pressed with a loving dote*

*It was through music she brought happiness
To everyone for whom she played
Toes tapping, bodies swaying
As the beautiful sound was made*

*Played from the heart was what she did
and did it with such style.
You couldn't help but want to sing
And you would certainly want to smile.*

*Those fingers are now quite still
No more for you will they play
But the musical memories will still live on
In your hearts they will always stay.*

Why Worry

*There are only two things to worry about,
either you are well or you are sick
If you are well,
then there is nothing to worry about
If you are sick,
there are two things to worry about,
either you will get well or you will die
If you get well,
there is nothing to worry about
If you die,
there are two things to worry about,
either you will go to heaven or hell
If you go to heaven,
there is nothing to worry about
But if you go to hell,
you will be so bloomin busy shaking
hands with your friends
You will have no time to WORRY!!!
So, Why Worry?*

Back In The Days

Back in the days of tanners and bobs,
When Mothers had patience and Fathers had jobs.
When football team families wore hand me down shoes,
and T.V gave only two channels to choose.

Back in the days of threepenny bits,
when schools employed nurses to search for your nits.
When snowballs were harmless; ice slides were permitted
and all of your jumpers were warm and hand knitted.

Back in the days of hot ginger beers,
when children remained so for more than six years.
When children respected what older folks said,
and pot was a thing you kept under your bed.

Back in the days of Listen with Mother,
when neighbours were friendly and talked to each other.
When cars were so rare you could play in the street.
When Doctors made house calls; Police walked the beat.

Back in the days of Milligan's Goons,
when butter was butter and songs all had tunes.
It was dumplings for dinner and trifle for tea,
and your annual break was a day by the sea.

Back in the days of Dixon's Dock Green,
Crackerjack pens and Lyons ice cream.
When children could freely wear National Health glasses,
and teachers all stood at the FRONT of their classes.

Back in the days of rocking and reeling,
when mobiles were things that you hung from the ceiling.
When woodwork and pottery got taught in schools,
and everyone dreamt of a win on the pools.

Back in the days when I was a lad,
I can't help but smile for the fun that I had.
Hopscotch and roller skates; snowballs to lob.
Back in the days of tanners and bobs.

The Magic of Christmas

*"Joy to the World", the carollers sang out
as last minute shoppers scurried about
desperately seeking that one special gift
that would give Christmas morning a magical lift.*

*As an old man stood standing listening to the song,
midst all the madness of the bustling throng,
in a shaky hoarse voice he began to join in
singing the words of the famous old hymn.*

*One by one people stopped with their madness
to join with the old man for a moment of gladness.
By the time the carollers finished with singing the song
the whole throng was united as they all sang along.*

*As if by magic from out of the sky
church bells rang out from a chapel near by.
And when it was over the people greeted each other
with messages of good will they shared with one another.*

*You see that magical lift the shoppers sought for so long
was not in the buying or scurrying along.
That magical gift so desperately sought
was the Spirit of Christmas - which could never be bought.*

Missing You At Christmas

*Every day without you
Since you had to go
Is like Summer without sunshine
And Christmas without snow
I wish that I could talk to you
There's so much that I would say
Life has changed so very much
Since you went away
I miss the bond between us
And I miss your kind support
You're in my mind and in my heart
And every Christmas thought
I always feel you close to me
And though you're far from sight
I'll search for you among the stars
That shine on Christmas night*

Deck the Halls

*Deck the halls with boughs of holly
I'm told it's the season to be jolly?
Goodwill to all
And lots of laughter
You will have fun you will, by golly!*

*Silent night, holy night
Is all really well? Is all really bright?
I see the food,
and gifts and sparkles
and try so hard to see the light*

*Away in a manger no sleep in my bed
Sweet memories spill over as I lay down my head
I dream of your face
And remember your smile
and know that there's plenty more tears to be shed*

*Ding dong merrily on high
In heaven the bells are ringing
And so they should
For you are there
Every angel should be singing!*

*And I am here, and Christmas has come
There's food to prepare and shopping to be done
I'll carry you with me through the days and the nights
Holding you tightly, your memory bright
And Christmas day survived will be another battle won.*

Examples of Family Tributes 1

Written by Sandra Southwell for the her mother Susan Southwell

Mum, although you are gone my memories of you will live on

Chasing Dave up the stairs during his 'terrible twos'
Using waterproof material to make us slippy shoes
Waving sparklers around on bonfire night in the dark
Taking picnics in the summer holidays to the park
Gardening, always gardening

Cleaning my shoes after I went knee-deep in cow poo
Laughing when a lion wee'd over Dad at London Zoo
Going to Nan & Grandad's at Deal for beach holidays
Coming to watch us perform in our school plays
Gardening, always gardening

Dancing around the kitchen to Elvis Presley songs
Tidying up to make sure everything's where it belongs
Making a new skin for my teddy when he was threadbare
Joining us on the waltzer at the fair
Gardening, always gardening

Sailing with friends and family on the Norfolk Broads
Praising us when we passed exams or won awards
Travelling to far-flung Tanzania and Peru for an exotic holiday
Walking in the hills and valleys of the UK
Gardening, always gardening

Growing everything from beans and plums to tomatoes
Making wine or gin from dandelions and sloes
Turning designer sketches into wonderful clothes
Inviting me to Belville Sassoon fashion shows
Gardening, always gardening

Putting up with me coming in late after a few wines
Even when my burnt toast set off the smoke alarm chimes
Picking raspberries, strawberries and blackberries down in Kent
Making friends wherever you went
Gardening, always gardening

Cooking delicious roast dinners, yours' were the best roast potatoes
Baking cakes for Christmas, birthdays or whenever you chose
Jumping out of your chair at sudden bangs on the TV
Joining in with Dad's love of photography
Gardening, always gardening

Decorating the house from top to bottom immaculately
Finding something new each year for the Christmas Tree
Spending time with your beloved grandchildren
Looking into the garden for a robin or a wren
Gardening, always gardening

You will be missed more than words can say
But you will be in my thoughts every day
Love you Mum - Sandra

Examples of Family Tributes 2

Written by Janet for her mother, Ivy Taylor
(AS MUM WOULD SAY)

I hope this box was clean
Before you put me in.
Make sure it's thoroughly dusted
Before you shut the lid.

Make sure it's got some air holes
Because you know how hot I get,
And give me an umbrella
I don't want my hair getting wet.

I banged my arm last night
Check there's no blood on my top
I tell you I didn't half swear
And the blood it would not stop.

Put the bags of recycling
Just outside in the bins
Check my lottery tickets
Just in case I've had a win.

Oh remember, don't forget
My plants will need a drink
You'll find the spray in the kitchen.
It's over by the sink.

And last but not least
Get some cake and take a sweet
Throw the rest out to the birds
Cause I don't think it will keep.

Oh and when you come to visit
Any flowers will do,
I like all varieties
And I'm sure Dad does too.

Top 10 popular songs

1	My Way	Frank Sinatra / Shirley Bassey
2	Time to Say Goodbye	Sarah Brightman and Andrea Bocelli
3	Wind Beneath My Wings	Bette Midler
4	Over the Rainbow	Eva Cassidy
5	Angels	Robbie Williams
6	You Raise Me Up	Westlife / Boyzone / Josh Grobin
7	You'll Never Walk Alone	Gerry and the Pacemakers
8	We'll meet again	Vera Lynn
9	My Heart Will Go On	Celine Dion
10	Unforgettable	Nat King Cole

More recently artists like Adele and Ed Sheeran are popular (April 2017)

Top 10 hymns

1	Abide With Me
2	The Lord Is My Shepherd
3	All Things Bright and Beautiful
4	Old Rugged Cross
5	How Great Thou Art
6	Amazing Grace
7	Jerusalem
8	Morning has Broken
9	The Day Thou Gavest, Lord, Is Ended
10	Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace

Top 10 classical music

1	Nimrod from Enigma Variations	Elgar
2	Canon in D	Pachelbel
3	Ave Maria	Schubert
4	Nessun Dorma	Puccini
5	Pie Jesu from Requiem	Faure
6	The Four Seasons	Vivaldi
7	Adagio	Albinoni/Bizet
8	Air on a G String	Bach
9	Largo from Xerxes	Handel
10	Clare de Lune	Debussy

INDEX

A

A butterfly · 43
A Celtic Blessing · 46
A Mother's love · 42
A Parent Talks To A Child Before The First Game · 12
A Question · 43
A Reflection on an Autumn Day · 34
A Sailor's Prayer · 25
Afterglow · 10
All The World's a Stage · 8
Alzheimer's or Dementia · 51
Angler's Prayer · 24
As I stood in the wilderness · 49
As We Look Back · 53
At every turning of my life · 44

B

Back In The Days · 63
Breath · 37

C

Crossing the Bar · 14

D

Dad Always Said · 21
Death Is Nothing At All · 28
Deck the Halls · 65
Dementia · 51
Desiderata · 39
Do Not Stand At My Grave and Weep · 15
Do Not Think Of Me and Weep · 15
Do not weep for me for I have not gone · 17
Don't Think of Him as Gone Away · 50
Don't cry for me · 36
Dust If You Must · 30

E

Ecclesiastes 3 · 47
Epitaph on a Friend · 38
Examples of Family Tributes 1 · 66
Examples of Family Tributes 2 · 67

F

Feel no guilt in Laughter · 36

Fisher of Men · 23
Footprints · 31
Footprints in the Sand · 31
For a Nurse · 11

G

God looked around his garden · 7
God Saw You Getting Tired 1 · 32
Going home · 41
Golden Memories · 48
Gone yet not forgotten · 53
Grandad · 20
Grandma · 20
Great Wings · 16

H

Have A Nice Day · 52
He Is Gone · 38
High Flight (An Airman's Ecstasy) · 9

I

I am there · 17
I am with you still - I do not sleep · 16
I fall asleep · 6
I Had a Dream · 31
I thank thee God, that I have lived · 43
If · 33
If ever there is tomorrow · 12
If I Should Die · 29
If only I could? · 61
If Tomorrow Never Comes · 41
I'm Fine Thank You · 26
Impressions of a Pilot · 9
Instructions · 59

L

Let Me Die, Working · 50
Life · 27
Look For Me In Rainbows · 37
Look Forward With Hope · 51
Love doesn't end with dying · 30

M

Miss Me but Let Me Go · 10
Missing You At Christmas · 65
My Mother Kept A Garden · 19

N

Native American Prayer for Serenity · 16
No Man is an Island · 49
Not, How Did He Die, but How Did He Live · 29
Number's Up · 11

O

One At Rest · 32
Our Mother Kept a Garden · 19
Our Parents Kept a Garden · 19

P

Pardon Me for Not Getting Up · 54
Parents · 39
Play Jolly Music at my Funeral · 18
Poor But Blessed In The Old Days · 27
PRAYERS · 46
Psalm 23 · 47

R

Reading: John 14: 1-7, 27 · 47
Remember Me · 56
Remember Me 3 · 56
Remember Me 4 · 57
Remember me When I'm Gone Away · 50
Remember Me, But Don't Be Sad · 29
Remmber Me · 56

S

Sea Fever · 14
Silly Old Baboon · 52
Smile - A thought for today · 49
Some Folk · 55, 57
Some People · 37
Stop All The Clocks · 33
Success · 17

T

Thank you for being a friend to me · 12

The Angler's Wish · 24
The Broken Chain · 48
The Chain · 48
The Cloths of Heaven · 6
The Cord · 51
The Dash · 30
The Dash Between · 58
The Gardener's Morning · 58
The Gift Of Music · 62
The Golf Course In The Sky · 10
The Great Game · 14
The Last Hero (Discworld 27) · 37, 42
The Life That I Have · 35
The Lord bless you · 46
The Lord's Prayer · 46
The Magic of Christmas · 64
The Serenity Prayer · 46
The Ship · 25
The Traveller · 40
The Wren · 59
To be by a lake · 23
Top 10 classical music · 68
Top 10 hymns · 68
Top 10 popular songs · 68

W

Warning · 54
We Are Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made On · 6
We Will Remember Him · 35
When God Saw You Getting Tired 2 · 44
When I'm Gone · 34, 55
When I'm gone · 45
Where do they go to? · 49
Why Worry · 62
With These Hands · 22
Woodland Burial · 34

Y

You Can Shed Tears · 38
You Left Quietly · 18
You Never Said I'm Leaving · 60
Young & Old · 7
Your Mother · 61
Your Mother Is Always With You. · 41