

# BEST QUOTES ON DEATH

A wife who loses a husband is called a widow. A husband who loses a wife is called a widower. A child who loses his parents is called an orphan. But...there is no word for a parent who loses a child, that's how awful the loss is!

—Jay Neugeboren

## A TOUCH OF LOVE

I would straighten your tie,  
Smooth your collar,  
Pick a bit of lint from your sleeve  
Before you left for your day's affairs  
And I turned my attention to mine.  
Today I brushed off a leaf  
That had fallen on your name.

—Doris Alsup

I noticed an old doll baby with only one leg lying by the side of a Federal soldier just as it dropped from his pocket when he fell writhing in the agony of death. It was obviously a memento of some little loved one at home which he had brought so far with him and had worn close to his heart on this day of danger and death. It was strange to see that emblem of childhood, that token of a father's love lying there amidst the dead and dying...I dismounted, picked it up and stuffed it back into the poor fellow's cold bosom that it might rest with him in the bloody grave which was to be forever unknown to those who loved and mourned him in his distant home.

--Confederate

Soldier Charles  
Minor Blackford

People disappear when they die. Their voice, their laughter, the warmth of their breath. Their flesh. Eventually their bones. All living memory of them ceases. This is both dreadful and natural. Yet for some there is an exception to this annihilation. For in the books they write, they continue to exist. We can rediscover them. Their humor, their tone of voice, their moods. Through the written word they can anger you or make you happy. They can comfort you. They can perplex you. They can alter you. All this, even though they are dead. Like flies in amber, like corpses frozen in the ice, that which according to the laws of nature should pass away is, by the miracle of ink on paper, preserved. It is a kind of magic.

—Diane Setterfield

It was a lovely May day two months before my seventh birthday when Rena, age four, was taken to Blowing Rock's new clinic to have her tonsils removed. 'She'll be home in a day or so,' my mother assured me. Rena never came home—except in a pretty little coffin decorated with cherubs, lined in white satin. She'd been administered an overdose of ether. To this day, when anyone I love leaves home for longer than a few hours, I'm filled with dread that they will not return.

--Tom Robbins

Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways at the last minute, champagne in one hand, strawberries in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming 'WOO HOO—That was Fun!'

—Hunter S. Thompson

You will lose someone you can't live without, and your heart will be badly broken, and the bad news is that you never completely get over the loss of your beloved. But this is also the good news. They live forever in your broken heart that doesn't seal back up. And you come through. It's like having a broken leg that never heals perfectly—that still hurts when the weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the limp.

—Anne Lamott

Some day soon, perhaps in forty years, there will be no one alive who has ever known me. That's when I will be truly dead—when I exist in no one's memory. I thought a lot about how someone very old is the last living individual to have known some person or cluster of people. When that person dies, the whole cluster dies, too, vanishes from the living memory. I wonder who that person will be for me. Whose death will make me truly dead?

—Irvin D. Yalom

Death is the end of a lifetime, not the end of a relationship.

—Mitch Albom

Early death—a child, a young parent, young people at war or in accidents—these are tragedies. But the death of someone who's had a long life isn't necessarily a tragedy.

--Katy Butler

Six feet of earth make all men equal.

--Italian Proverb

I had him cremated and his ashes made into an egg timer. He never did any work while he was alive, so he might as well do some now that he's dead.

--Unknown

There's this mistaken notion that wars end, but they don't end. What about the women that married the veterans and had to sit through silent dinner after silent dinner? Somewhere in this country there's a 95-year-old woman who will wake up at night and say, 'Where's my baby?' The answer is, her baby has been dead for 45 years. But the war's not over for that Gold Star mother. It'll never be over, and you can't expect it to be over.

—Tim O'Brien

The moment that you left me, my heart was split in two. One side was filled with memories, the other side died with you. I often lay awake at night when the world is fast asleep and take a walk down memory lane with tears upon my cheek. Remembering you is easy. I do it every day. But missing you is a heartache that never goes away. I hold you tightly within my heart, and there you will remain. You see, life has gone on without you, but will never be the same.

—Blair Robertson

Tears are sometimes an inappropriate response to death. When a life has been lived completely honestly, completely successfully, or just completely, the correct response to death's perfect punctuation mark is a smile.

—Julie Burchill

Today, I kissed my dad on the forehead as he passed away in a small hospital bed. About 5 seconds after he passed, I realized it was the first time I had given him a kiss since I was a little boy.

—Unknown

My sister will die over and over again for the rest of my life. Grief is forever. It doesn't go away; it becomes a part of you, step for step, breath for breath. I will never stop grieving Bailey because I will never stop loving her. That's just how it is. Grief and love are conjoined, you don't get one without the other. All I can do is love her, and love the world, emulate her by living with daring and spirit and joy.

—Jandy Nelson

More than death, one fears the utter isolation that accompanies it. We try to go through life two by two, but each one of us must die alone—no one can die our death with us or for us. The shunning of the dying by the living prefigures final absolute abandonment.

—Irvin D. Yalom

Every time you get dressed, remember...if you die today, that's going to be your ghost outfit, forever.

—Internet Meme

The man who dies...rich dies disgraced.

--Andrew Carnegie

A father lives after death in his son.

--Sanskrit

When I die, I want to die like my grandmother, who died peacefully in her sleep. Not screaming like all the passengers in her car.

—Unknown

I've got a great ambition to die of exhaustion rather than boredom.

—Thomas Carlyle

Out of the millions of ways you can die, you've avoided all of them.

—Internet Meme

Even at our birth, death does but stand aside a little. And every day he looks towards us and muses somewhat to himself whether that day or the next he will draw nigh.

—Robert Bolt

We read our mail and counted up our missions—  
In bombers named for girls, we burned  
The cities we had learned about in school—Till our lives wore out; our bodies lay  
among  
The people we had killed and never seen.  
When we lasted long enough they gave us medals;  
When we died they said, 'Our casualties were low.'

—Randall Jarrell

My other brother-in-law died. He was a karate expert, then joined the army. The first time he saluted, he killed himself.

--Henny Youngman

If anything, I often think, perhaps we should grieve for the living. Those left behind, without a father or a mother. Those who must now face the rest of their days living a war without end.

--Michael Ware

In the arts of life man invents nothing; but in the arts of death he outdoes Nature herself, and produces by chemistry and machinery all the slaughter of plague, pestilence, and famine.

—George Bernard Shaw

Can anything be more ridiculous than that a man should have the right to kill me because he lives on the other side of the water, and because his ruler has a quarrel with mine, though I have none with him?

—Blaise Pascal

They wrote in the old days that it is sweet and fitting to die for one's country. But in modern war there is nothing sweet nor fitting in your dying. You will die like a dog for no good reason.

--Ernest Hemingway

I found it very hard to tell people that I wanted to talk. It felt like I was imposing my sadness on them. When someone asked, 'How are you?' I kept saying, 'I'm fine,' and then people wouldn't ask me any questions. But I learned to say 'I'm actually not doing that well.' One of the most common things about grief, about loss, about adversity, is silence. So what happens is, you go through this adversity or trauma, and then what piles on top of that is the isolation of no one talking about it.

—Sheryl Sandberg

Life is hard for everyone. That's why there's such a nice reward at the end of it.

—Aidan Quinn

No individual death among human beings is important. Someone who dies leaves his work behind and that does not entirely die. It never entirely dies as long as humanity exists.

—Isaac Asimov

I want to be all used up when I die.

—George Bernard Shaw

All the whackjob psychologists out there will tell you that grief is a process. Some say it has five stages. Others say that grief should only last two years at the most, otherwise it's 'abnormal'. Putting an expiration date on grief though is like putting out the flame on a burning candle. It might stop the candle from melting down and falling apart, but in the long run the candle goes solid, freezes in a catatonic state. Take away a person's grief and guaranteed they'll only be a frozen shell of a human being afterwards. Grief is only love, it's nothing to hide or send away with happy pills and mother's little helpers. Grief is a lifeline connecting two people who are in different realms together, and it's a sign of loyalty and hope.

—Rebecca McNutt

When you stop learning, stop listening, stop looking and asking questions, always new questions, then it is time to die.

--Lillian Smith

Today, I interviewed a woman who is terminally ill. 'So,' I tried to delicately ask, 'What is it like to wake up every morning and know that you are dying?' 'Well,' she responded, 'What is it like to wake up every morning and pretend that you are not?'

—Unknown

Who the hell wants to live forever? Most of us, apparently; but it's idiotic. After all, there is such a thing as life-saturation: the point when everything is pure effort and total repetition.

--Truman Capote

When a person is born we rejoice, and when they're married we jubilate, but when they die we try to pretend nothing has happened.

—Margaret Mead

When you miss someone who has passed away, think of it as a blessing that you were lucky enough to have had the kind of bond that makes you miss them that much.

—Unknown

I was ten when they buried you.  
At twenty I tried to die  
And get back, back, back to you.  
I thought even the bones would do.

—Sylvia Plath

When our loved one dies, you don't get over your grief by forgetting. You get through your grief by remembering.

—Unknown

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.

—Unknown

The only things you can take with you when you leave this world are the things you've packed inside your heart.

—Susan Gale

The past few years, I've made a real point of cozying up to death and making it a friend. That's what I always do with things that frighten me. I read about death, and I think about myself dying and how I want it to be. It helps me to plan. If you know you want to have certain loved ones around you, then you have to live in a way that will have them there. And you don't want important things going unsaid before you die. Death is inevitable, so why not make peace with it? I'm not scared of it at all.

—Jane Fonda

Death had to take Roosevelt [Teddy] sleeping, for if he had been awake, there would have been a fight.

—Thomas R. Marshall

I thought of you with love today,  
but that is nothing new.  
I thought about you yesterday,  
and days before that too.  
I think of you in silence,  
I often speak your name.  
All I have are memories  
and a picture in a frame.  
Your memory is a keepsake,  
with which I'll never part.  
God has you in His keeping,  
I have you in my heart.

—Unknown

There's no tragedy in life like the death of a child. Things never get back to the way they were.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

Our final resting place is commemorated with headstones. The larger and costlier ones memorialize people whose children loved them more.

--*Earth (The Book) A  
Visitor's Guide to  
the Human Race*

You were always so thoughtful and kind,  
What wonderful memories you leave behind.  
I know you walk beside me,  
And when my life is through,  
I pray that God will take my hand  
And lead me straight to you.

--Unknown

The need to belong is so strong that it sometimes expresses itself even in death. 'I'm walking to the bridge,' begins a Golden Gate Bridge suicide note. 'If one person smiles at me on the way, I will not jump.' The writer jumped. He was alone, and so are more of the rest of us.

--Thomas Joiner

There'll be two dates on your tombstone everyone will read them.. but the only thing that matters is the little dash between them.

--Unknown

You can spend your whole life trying to be popular but, at the end of the day, the size of the crowd at your funeral will be largely dictated by the weather.

--Frank Skinner

Your death and my death are mainly of importance to ourselves. The black plumes will be stripped off our hearses within the hour; tears will dry, hurt hearts close again, our graves grow level with the church-yard, and although we are away, the world wags on. It does not miss us; and those who are near us, when the first strangeness of vacancy wears off, will not miss us much either.

--Alexander Smith

To a father, when a child dies, the future dies; to a child when a parent dies, the past dies.

--Red Auerbach

The right to choose death when life no longer holds meaning is not only the next liberation but the last human right.

--Marya Mannes

To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die.

—Thomas Campbell

Not louder shrieks to pitying heav'n are cast,  
When husbands or when lapdogs breathe their last.

--Alexander Pope

Every individual existence goes out in a lonely spasm of helpless agony.

--William James

Because I could not stop for Death,  
He kindly stopped for me;  
The carriage held but just ourselves  
And Immortality.

--Emily Dickinson

Death is simply a shedding of the physical body, like the butterfly coming out of a cocoon. It is a transition into a higher state of consciousness, where you continue to perceive, to understand, to laugh, to be able to grow, and the only thing you lose is something that you don't need anymore...your physical body. It's like putting away your winter coat when spring comes.

--Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

The individual succumbs, but he does not die if he has left something to mankind.

--Will Durant

The only truly dead are those who have been forgotten.

--Jewish Saying

How frighteningly few are the persons whose death would spoil our appetite and make the world seem empty.

--Eric Hoffer

Our birth is nothing but our death begun,  
As tapers waste the moment they take fire.

--Edward Young

God's finger touched him, and he slept.

--Alfred, Lord Tennyson

The man who, in a fit of melancholy, kills himself today, would have wished to live had he waited a week.

--Voltaire

Men fear death, as if unquestionably the greatest evil, and yet no man knows that it may not be the greatest good.

--William Mitford

Razors pain you;  
Rivers are damp;  
Acids stain you;  
And drugs cause cramp.  
Guns aren't lawful;  
Nooses give;  
Gas smells awful;  
You might as well live.

--Dorothy Parker

It is not death, but dying which is terrible.

--Henry Fielding

Everyone should fear death until he has something that will live on after his death.

--Unknown

The babe is at peace within the womb,  
The corpse is at rest within the tomb;  
We begin in what we end.

--Percy Bysshe Shelley

Perhaps the best tribute you can pay some one who dies is to share his belief in life by putting your life ahead of his death.

--Max Lerner

As a well-spent day brings happy sleep, so life well used brings happy death.

--Leonardo da Vinci

It astonishes me to observe how irritated moderns become, not so much at the thought as at the mention of death. That's one thing they don't quite know how to take. I don't mean that we should be 'brave.' That stinks. But it is equally asinine to pretend to ignore it.

--William Carlos  
Williams

It cost me never a stab nor squirm  
To tread by chance upon a worm.  
'Aha, my little dear,' I say,  
'Your clan will pay me back one day.'

--Dorothy Parker

A man's dying is more the survivors' affair than his own.

--Thomas Mann

At a makeshift morgue, ...guards handed me paper tissues to block some of the smell. Many of the bodies...were mutilated...but one very little girl, I remember, still wore a tidy blue dress, white socks, shiny black shoes, and tiny gold bangles on her wrist. On a slab nearby, a young mother continued to clutch her baby as she had done at the moment they died. [From an Iranian airliner downed by missile fire]

--Christopher Dickey

Birth is the beginning of death.

--Thomas Fuller

The more complete one's life is, the more...one's creative capacities are fulfilled, the less one fears death...people are not afraid of death per se, but of the incompleteness of their lives.

--Lisl Marburg  
Goodman

Remember me.

(14-Year-Old Polish Girl About to Hanged, Ravensbruck Concentration Camp.)

--Quoted in Howard  
Blum,  
*Wanted!*

The fear of death is the greatest compliment we pay to life.

--Unknown

When I am dead, my dearest,  
Sing no sad songs for me.

--Christina Rossetti

The riders in a race do not stop when they reach the goal. There is a little finishing canter before coming to a standstill. There is time to hear the kind voices of friends and say to oneself, 'The work is done.'

--Oliver Wendell  
Holmes, Sr.

We should weep for men at their birth, not at their death.

--Baron de  
Montesquieu

Man is the only animal that contemplates death, and also the only animal that shows any sign of doubt of its finality.

—William Ernest  
Hocking

I gave my life to learning how to live.  
Now that I have organized it all...It is just about over.

--Sandra Hochman

Those who welcome death have only tried it from the ears up.

--Wilson Mizner

Things have a terrible permanence when people die.

--Joyce Kilmer

Dying is a wild night and a new road.

--Emily Dickinson

All human things are subject to decay,  
And when fate summons, monarchs must obey.

--John Dryden

We die only once, and for such a long time!

--Moliere

After sixty years the stern sentence of the burial service seems to have a meaning that one did not notice in former years. There begins to be something personal about it.

--Oliver Wendell  
Holmes, Sr.

When our parents are living we feel that they stand between us and death; when they go, we move to the edge of the unknown.

--R. I. Fitzhenry

You have to learn to do everything, even to die.

--Gertrude Stein

When a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.

--Samuel Johnson

I'm not afraid to die. I just don't want to be there when it happens.

--Woody Allen

Life is a great surprise. I do not see why death should not be an even greater one.

--Vladimir Nabokov

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.

--John Donne

There is no such thing as death,  
In nature, nothing dies:  
From each sad moment of decay  
Some forms of life arise.

--Charles Mackay

A man's heart is a grave long before he is buried. Youth dies, and beauty, and hope, and desire. A grave is buried within a grave when a man is buried.

--Eric Hoffer

If life must not be taken too seriously—then so neither must death.

--Samuel Butler

The end comes when we no longer talk with ourselves. It is the end of genuine thinking and the beginning of the final loneliness. The remarkable thing is that the cessation of the inner dialogue marks also the end of our concern with the world around us. It is as if we noted the world and think about it only when we have to report it to ourselves.

--Eric Hoffer

As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand.

--*Ecclesiastes 5:15*

The fear of death is more to be dreaded than death itself.

--Publilius Syrus

One always dies too soon—or too late. And yet one's whole life is complete at that moment, with a line drawn neatly under it, ready for the summing up. You are—your life, and nothing else.

--Jean-Paul Sartre

Everyone who loves is vulnerable to the pain of grief, for love means attachment and all human attachments are subject to loss. But grief need not, should not, be a destructive emotion.

--Joyce Brothers

The dying man has probably lost during the course of life things more important than what he is about to lose by dying.

--Friedrich Nietzsche

When I was analyzing I observed clearly that the fear of death was in proportion to not-living. The less a person was in life, the greater the fear. By being alive I mean living out of all the cells, all the parts of one's self. The cells which are denied become atrophied, like a dead arm, and infect the rest of the body. People living deeply have no fear of death.

--Anaïs Nin

Few men ever drop dead from overwork, but many quietly curl up and die because of undersatisfaction.

--Sydney J. Harris

A protracted illness seems to prepare one for the end, though when it comes, even after months of illness, it always seems sudden and terrible. I think death is always terrible, even in what is looked upon as its most peaceful and calmest forms.

--Basil W. Maturin

You never realize death until you realize love.

--Katherine Butler  
Hathaway

Men do not live any longer than they wish to.

--Elbert Hubbard

The day of our birth is one day's advance towards our death.

--Thomas Fuller

Our birth is nothing but our death begun.

--Edward Young

It makes small difference to the dead, if they are buried in the tokens of luxury. All this is an empty glorification left for those who live.

--Euripides

Dust to dust, ashes to ashes, and the remains to a memorial park. All this is supposed to maintain the dignity of death. Or is it the dignity of undertakers?

--Joseph Wood Krutch

Most persons have died before they expire—died to all earthly longings, so that the last breath is only, as it were, the locking of the door of the already deserted mansion.

--Oliver Wendell  
Holmes, Sr.

It is nothing to die; it is frightful not to live.

--Victor Hugo

Do not rejoice over anyone's death; remember that we all must die.

--*Ecclesiastics* 7:7

It is as natural to die as to be born.

--Francis Bacon

Every tiny part of us cries out against the idea of dying, and hopes to live forever.  
--Ugo Betti

You never know what life means till you die;  
Even throughout life, 'tis death that makes life live,  
Gives it whatever the significance.

--Robert Browning

Death in itself is nothing; but we fear  
To be we know not what, we know not where.

--John Dryden

All human things are subject to decay,  
And when fate summons, monarchs must obey.

--John Dryden

Death always comes too early or too late.

--English Proverb

What greater pain could mortals have than this:  
To see their children dead before their eyes?

--Euripides

What good can come from meeting death with tears?...If a man  
Is sorry for himself, he doubles death.

--Euripides

To die is poignantly bitter, but the idea of having to die without having lived is  
unbearable.

--Erich Fromm

Death holds no horrors. It is simply the ultimate horror of life.

--Jean Giraudoux

Our repugnance to death increases in proportion to our consciousness of having  
lived in vain.

--William Hazlitt

Death has but one terror, that it has no tomorrow.

--Eric Hoffer

There is only one way to be prepared for death: to be sated. In the soul, in the heart, in the spirit, in the flesh. To the brim.

--Henry de  
Montherlant

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who  
Before us passed the door of Darkness through,  
Not one returns to tell us of the Road,  
Which to discover we must travel too.

--Omar Khayyam

Nobody knows, in fact, what death is, nor whether to man it is not perchance the greatest of all blessings; yet people fear it as if they surely knew it to be the worst of evils.

--Socrates

Death is not anything...death is not...It's the absence of presence, nothing more...the endless time of never coming back...a gap you can't see, and when the wind blows through it, it makes no sound.

--Tom Stoppard

Let us endeavor so to live that when we come to die even the undertaker will be sorry.

--Mark Twain

Spare me the whispering, crowded room  
The friends who come and gape and go,  
The ceremonious air of gloom—  
All, which makes death a hideous show.

--Matthew Arnold

The chief mourner does not always attend the funeral.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

The pomp of funerals has more regard to the vanity of the living than the honour of the dead.

--La Rochefoucauld

Do not fear death so much, but rather the inadequate life.

--Bertolt Brecht

Healthy children will not fear life if their elders have integrity enough not to fear death.

--Erik H. Erikson

Death is what men want when the anguish of living is more than they can bear.

--Euripides

Man has given a false importance to death  
Any animal plant or man who dies  
adds to Nature's compost heap  
becomes the manure without which  
nothing could grow nothing could be created  
Death is simply part of the process.

--Peter Weiss

Death is one moment, and life is so many of them.

--Tennessee Williams

Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die.

--*Isaiah 22:13*

Such is the frailty of man that even where he makes the truest and most forcible impression—in the memory, in the heart of his beloved—, there also he must perish.

--Johann Wolfgang  
von Goethe

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,  
And our hearts, though stout and brave,  
Still, like muffled drums, are beating  
Funeral marches to the grave.

—Henry Wadsworth  
Longfellow

When I catch myself resenting not being immortal, I pull myself up short by asking whether I should really like the prospect of having to make out an annual income-tax return for an infinite number of years ahead.

--Arnold J. Toynbee

Lament not the dead but the living.

--Thomas Fuller

When we lose one we love, our bitterest tears are called forth by the memory of hours when we loved not enough.

--Maurice Maeterlinck

What we call mourning for our dead is perhaps not so much grief at not being able to call them back as it is grief at not being able to want to do so.

--Thomas Mann

Not louder shrieks to pitying heaven are cast,  
When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their last.

--Alexander Pope

Do not seek death. Death will find you. But seek the road which makes death a fulfillment.

--Dag Hammarskjöld

Death—the gate of life.

--Latin Proverb

It is cowardice to commit suicide.

--Napoleon

It is impossible that anything so natural, so necessary, and so universal as death, should ever have been designed by Providence as an evil to mankind.

--Jonathan Swift

The sole equality on earth is death.

--Philip J. Bailey

He who fears death has already lost the life he covets.

--Cato the Censor

All our knowledge merely helps us to die a more painful death than the animals that know nothing.

--Maeterlinck

Death is more universal than life; everyone dies but not everyone lives.

--Andrew Sachs

He that died half a year ago is as dead as Adam.

--Unknown

Death is but a name, a date,  
A milestone by the stormy road,  
Where you may lay aside your load  
And bow your face and rest and wait,  
Defying fear, defying fate.

--Joaquin Miller

When death puts out the flame, the snuff will tell  
If we are wax or tallow, by the smell.

--Benjamin Franklin

Death is for many of us the gate of hell; but we are inside on the way out, not  
outside on the way in.

--George Bernard Shaw

I think of death as some delightful journey  
That I shall take when all my tasks are done.

--Ella Wheeler Wilcox

When death comes, he respects neither age nor merit. He sweeps from this earthly  
existence the sick and the strong, the rich and the poor, and should teach us to live  
to be prepared for death.

--Andrew Jackson

He that fears death lives not.

--George Herbert

Men fear death, as children fear to go in the dark: and as that natural fear in  
children is increased with tales, so is the other.

--Francis Bacon

It appears to me impossible that I should cease to exist, or that this active, restless  
spirit, equally alive to joy and sorrow, should be only organized dust.

—Mary Wollstonecraft

No one knows but that death is the greatest of all human blessings.

--Plato

For him who has faith, death, so far as it is his own death, ceases to possess any quality of terror. The experiment will be over, the rinsed beaker returned to its shelf, the crystals gone dissolving down the waste-pipe; the duster sweeps the bench.

--H. G. Wells

For a man who has done his natural duty, death is as natural and welcome as sleep.

--George Santayana

Happy he who dies before he calls for death to take him away.

--Francis Bacon

Weep not for him who departs from life, for there is no suffering beyond death.

--Palladas

Grief is the agony of an instant: the indulgence of grief the blunder of a life.

--Benjamin Disraeli

Every moment of life is a step toward the grave.

--Crebillon

The wise man is never surprised by death: he is always ready to depart.

--Jean de La Fontaine

Death is a remedy always ready to hand, but only to be used in the last extremity.

--Moliere

There are two deaths: to cease loving and being loved is unbearable. But to cease to live is of no consequence.

--Voltaire

How sad it is that when a man dies his wisdom, his youth, his beauty, or his virtue cannot be inherited!

--Walther von der  
Vogelweide

Death is not an event in life; we do not experience death.

--Ludwig Wittgenstein

Fear of death is worse than dying.

--J. C. F. von Schiller

Man's happiest lot is to know when to die.

--Lucan

The dead to their graves, the living to their dinners.

--Spanish Proverb

He who fears death cannot enjoy life.

--Spanish Proverb

I acquiesce in my death with complete willingness, uncoloured by hesitation; how foolish to cling to life when God has ordained otherwise!

--Jorge Manrique

It is not fitting to grieve or weep, lest our sorrows grow still more unbearable.

--Aeschylus

A suppressed grief chokes and seethes within, thereby multiplying its own strength.

--Ovid

If you want to die happily, learn to live; if you would live happily, learn to die.

--Celio Calcagnini

As men, we are all equal in the presence of death.

--Publilius Syrus

Death, like birth, is a secret of Nature.

--Marcus Aurelius  
Antoninus

The nearer the time comes for our departure from this life, the greater our regret for wasting so much of it.

--Unknown

When we die we leave behind us all that we have and take with us all that we are.

--Unknown

Wherever your life ends, it is all there. The advantage of living is not measured by length, but use; some men have lived long, and lived little; attend to it while you are in it. It lies in your will, not in the number of years, for you to have lived enough.

--Montaigne

Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other.

--Francis Bacon

It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives.

--Samuel Johnson

The grave itself is but a covered bridge  
Leading from light to light, through a brief darkness.

--Henry Wadsworth  
Longfellow

All say, 'How hard it is that we have to die'—a strange complaint to come from the mouths of people who have had to live.

--Mark Twain

On no subject are our ideas more warped and pitiable than on death....Let children walk with nature, let them see the beautiful blendings and communions of death and life, their joyous inseparable unity, as taught in woods and meadows, plains and mountains and streams of our blessed star, and they will learn that death is stingless indeed, and as beautiful as life, and that the grave has no victory, for it never fights. All is divine harmony.

--John Muir

Under the wide and starry sky,  
Dig the grave and let me lie.  
Glad did I live and gladly die,  
And I laid me down with a will.

--Robert Louis  
Stevenson

On the plus side, death is one of the few things that can be done as easily lying down.

—Woody Allen

Death is always and under all circumstances a tragedy, for if it is not, then it means that life itself has become one.

--Theodore Roosevelt

To run away from trouble is a form of cowardice and, while it is true that the suicide braves death, he does it not for some noble object but to escape some ill.

--Aristotle

We cannot tear out a single page from our life, but we can throw the whole book into the fire.

--George Sand

Every year without knowing it I have passed the day. (The anniversary of my death)

--William Stanley  
Merwin

He is miserable, that dieth not before he desires to die.

--Samuel Johnson

Don't try to live forever. You will not succeed.

--George Bernard Shaw

We understand death for the first time when he puts his hand upon one whom we love.

--Madame De Stael

Some die without having really lived, while others continue to live, in spite of the fact that they have died.

--Unknown

The worst evil of all is to leave the ranks of the living before one dies.

--Seneca

A man dies before we appreciate him.

--Liberian Proverb

The reward of great men is that, long after they have died, one is not quite sure that they are dead.

--Jules Renard

Gray hairs are death's blossoms.

--English Proverb

O how small a portion of earth will hold us when we are dead, who ambitiously seek after the whole world while we are living.

--Philip II

There is but one easy place in this world, and that is the grave.

--Henry Ward Beecher

The thought of eternity consoles for the shortness of life.

--Luc de Clapiers

The only real equality is in the cemetery.

--German Proverb

Tis after death that we measure men.

--James Barron Hope

Death—the last sleep? No, it is the final awakening.

--Walter Scott

Now comes the mystery.

--Henry Ward Beecher

A punishment to some, to some a gift, and to many a favor.

--Seneca

I look upon life as a gift from God. I did nothing to earn it. Now that the time is coming to give it back, I have no right to complain.

--Joyce Cary

The gods conceal from men the happiness of death, that they may endure life.

--Lucan

We owe a deep debt of gratitude to Adam, the first great benefactor of the human race: he brought death into the world.

--Mark Twain

Good men must die, but death cannot kill their names.

--Proverb

Don't strew me with roses after I'm dead.  
When Death claims the light of my brow  
No flowers of life will cheer me: instead  
You may give me my roses now!

--Thomas F. Healey

Death is a very dull, dreary affair, and my advice to you is to have nothing whatever to do with it.

--W. Somerset Maugham

As long as I have a want, I have a reason for living. Satisfaction is death.

--George Bernard Shaw

As men, we are all equal in the presence of death.

--Publilius Syrus

Death is a delightful hiding-place for weary men.

--Herodotus

Death is just a distant rumor to the young.

--Andy Rooney

I believe that the struggle against death, the unconditional and self-willed determination to live, is the mode of power behind the lives and activities of all outstanding men.

--Hermann Hesse

It may be that we have all lived before and died, and this is Hell.

--A. L. Prusick

Human life consists in mutual service. No grief, pain, misfortune, or 'broken heart' is excuse for cutting off one's life while any power of service remains. But when all usefulness is over, when one is assured of an unavoidable and imminent death, it is the simplest of human rights to choose a quick and easy death in place of a slow and horrible one.

--Charlotte Perkins  
Gilman (Suicide  
Note)

There is no man so blessed that some who stand by his deathbed won't hail the occasion with delight.

--Marcus Aurelius

Body and mind, like man and wife, do not always agree to die together.

--Charles Caleb Colton

I will be dead in a few months. But it hasn't given me the slightest anxiety or worry. I always knew I was going to die.

--B. F. Skinner

Old age is an island surrounded by death.

--Juan Montalvo

We do not die wholly at our deaths: we have moldered away gradually long before. Faculty after faculty, interest after interest, attachment after attachment disappear: we are torn from ourselves while living.

--William Hazlitt

To achieve great things, we must live as though we were never going to die.

--Vauvenargues

### **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 sunlight on ripened grain.  
I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you waken in the morning's hush,  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
    of quiet birds in circled flight.  
I am the soft star that shines at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry;  
I am not there. I did not die.

--Margaret Fishback  
Powers

The hard thing to take about your own death is how quickly people can adjust to it. The next day at the office someone would say, 'Isn't it too bad about Hugh? Say, have you had lunch yet?'

--Hugh Downs

To fear death, gentlemen, is nothing other than to think oneself wise when one is not; for it is to think one knows what one does not know. No man knows whether death may not even turn out to be the greatest of blessings for a human being; and yet people fear it as if they knew for certain that it is the greatest of evils.

--Socrates

Why do not you look at this miserable little life, with all its ups and downs, as I do? At the very worst, 'tis but a scratch, a temporary ill, to be so cured by that dear old doctor, Death.

--Edwin Booth

A myriad of men are born; they labor and sweat and struggle for bread; they squabble and scold and fight; they scramble for little mean advantages over each other. Age creeps upon them; ...ambition is dead; pride is dead; vanity is dead; longing for release is in their place. It comes at last—the only unpoisoned gift earth ever had for them—and they vanish from a world where they were of no consequence.

--Mark Twain

It is a brave act of valor to condemn death; but where life is more terrible than death, it is then the truest valor to dare to live.

--Thomas Browne

Death, the only immortal who treats us all alike, whose pity and whose peace and whose refuge are for all—the soiled and the pure, the rich and the poor, the loved and the unloved.

--Mark Twain

Whoever lives long must outlive those whom he loves and honours. Such is the condition of our present existence, that life must one time lose its associations, and every inhabitant of the earth must walk downward to the grave alone and unregarded, without any partner of his joy or grief, without any interested witness of his misfortunes or success.

--Samuel Johnson

Life is a movie. Death is a photograph.

--Susan Sontag

So long as governments set the example of killing their enemies, private individuals will occasionally kill theirs.

--Elbert G. Hubbard

Do not seek death. Death will find you. But seek the road which makes death a fulfillment.

--Dag Hammarskjöld

Death is evidently not a real tragedy for those who do not feel life.

--Arthur Janov

I'm the one that's got to die when it's time for me to die, so let me live my life the way I want to.

--Jimi Hendrix

A man who won't die for something is not fit to live.

--Dr. Martin Luther  
King, Jr.

Memorial Service: Farewell party for someone who has already left.

--Robert Byrne

I have had just about all I can take of myself.

--S. N. Behrman  
(At age 75)

Being over seventy is like being engaged in a war. All our friends are going or gone and we survive amongst the dead and the dying as on a battlefield.

--Muriel Spark

Here lies my wife; here let her lie!  
Now she's at rest, and so am I.

--John Dryden

That life may not be prolonged beyond the power of usefulness is one of the most natural, and apparently of the most reasonable wishes man can form for the future.

--Lucy Aikin

Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die.

--Joe Louis

The thought of death came and stayed with her and lent her a sort of drowsy cheer.  
It would be nice, nice and restful, to be dead.

--Dorothy Parker

Eternal rest sounds comforting in the pulpit; well, you try it once, and see how  
heavy time will hang on your hands.

--Mark Twain

The marble keeps merely a cold and sad memory of a man who would else be  
forgotten. No man who needs a monument ever ought to have one.

--Nathaniel Hawthorne

What madness it is for a man to starve himself to enrich his heir, and so turn a  
friend into an enemy! For his joy at your death will be proportioned to what you  
leave him.

--Seneca

Death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss is what dies inside us while  
we live.

--Norman Cousins

You know, you can't get out of life alive! We can either die in the bleachers or die on  
the field. We might as well come down on the field and go for it!

--Les Brown

It is not death that a man should fear, but he should fear never beginning to live.

--Marcus Aurelius

Life! we've been long together  
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;  
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear,—  
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;  
Then steal away, give little warning,  
Chose thine own time;  
Say not 'Good night,' but in some brighter clime  
Bid me 'Good morning.'

--Anna Letitia Barbauld

Turning away from the rest of the world, and turning inward—is death.

--Connie Warner Pepple

Love is the only thing that  
we can carry with us when we go,  
and it makes the end so easy.

--Louisa May Alcott

Not many people have ever died of love. But multitudes have perished, and are perishing every hour...for the lack of it.

--James Baldwin

The chief problem about death, incidentally, is the fear that there may be no after-life—a depressing thought, particularly for those who have bothered to shave. Also there is the fear that there is an afterlife but no one will know where it's being held.

--Woody Allen

There is a golden age: the age of childhood, of ignorance; as soon as one knows one is going to die, childhood is over.

--Eugene Ionesco

Life is slowly bending me, like a wrestler forcing an opponent to the floor, to the idea of the end.

--James Salter

Death is terrible, but still more terrible is the feeling that you might live forever.

--Anton Chekhov

We sometimes congratulate ourselves at the moment of waking from a troubled dream: it may be so the moment after death.

--Nathaniel Hawthorne

Thou, divine Death, to which everything returns and disappears,  
Receive thy children into thy star-studded bosom;  
Free us from time, number, space;  
Give us back the peace that life interrupted.

--Leconte de Lisle

Man's ultimate happiness lies not in this life.

--Thomas Aquinas

The man who has accomplished all that he thinks worth while, has begun to die.

--E. T. Trigg

Death, my son, is a benefit for all of us; it is the night of this turbulent day that we call Life.

--Bernardin de St. Pierre

Regarding death, be neither careless nor impatient nor contemptuous, but wait for it as one of Nature's procedures.

--Marcus Aurelius

There comes a time in the life of every young person when dying is just as normal and exciting as living.

--Colette

The moral constitution of any society determines the number of voluntary deaths. In each nation...there is a collective force, a certain amount of energy driving people to kill themselves.

--Emile Durkheim

A little season of love and laughter,  
Of light and life, and pleasure and pain,  
And a horror of outer darkness after,  
And dust returneth to dust again.

--Adam L. Gordon

Death is losing its terror. It is the emergency exit for a world that is becoming more frightening than death ever was.

--Julian Green

Death neither alarms nor frightens one who has had a long career of fruitful toil. The knowledge that my work has been helpful to many fills me with joy and great satisfaction.

--Mary McLeod Bethune

Numberless are the world's wonders, but none  
More wonderful than man...  
...from every wind  
He has made himself secure—from all but one:  
In the late wind of death he cannot stand.

--Sophocles

I don't want to achieve immortality through my work...I want to achieve it through not dying.

--Woody Allen

Death keeps no calendar.

--Thomas Fuller

It is good to die before one has done anything deserving death.

--Anaxandrides

For death there is no medicine.

--German Proverb

Waldo is one of those people who would be enormously improved by death.

--Saki

I remember once I was drinking tea in one of these front rooms with a middle-aged lady who'd just lost her husband, and she asked me if I'd like to have a look at him...Over we went to the coffin...Well, you don't really know what to say, do you, so I said, 'He looks well, doesn't he?' and she said, 'He ought to. We only came back from Brighton last week.'

--Robert Robinson

Death is nature's way of telling you to slow down.

--Dick Sharples

Die, my dear doctor? That's the last thing I shall do.

--Lord Palmerston

I don't mind dying; the trouble is, you feel so bloody stiff the next day.

--George Axelrod

Don't go to sleep, so many people die there.

--Mark Twain

To lose one parent may be regarded as a misfortune...to lose both seems like carelessness.

--Oscar Wilde

The first requisite for immortality is death.

--Stanislaw J. Lec

There is nothing terrible in life for the man who realizes that there is nothing terrible in death.

--Epicurus

Life, in my estimation, is a biological misadventure that we terminate on the shoulders of six strange men whose only objective is to make a hole in one with you.

--Fred Allen

The life of the dead consists in being present in the minds of the living.

--Cicero

Every man dies, but not every man has lived.

--William Wallace

Show me the manner in which a nation or a community cares for its dead. I will measure exactly the sympathies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land, and their loyalty to high ideals.

--William E. Gladstone

Only those are fit to live who do not fear to die; and none are fit to die who have shrunk from the joy of life and the duty of life. Both life and death are parts of the same Great Adventure.

--Theodore Roosevelt

A dying man needs to die as a sleepy man needs to sleep, and there comes a time when it is wrong, as well as useless, to resist.

--Stewart Alsop

Is the best life the longest life?

--Dr. Seymour Perlin

Growing old was simply a process of drawing closer to that ultimate independence called death.

--Martha Ostenso

The nearer she came to death, the more, by some perversity of nature, did she enjoy living.

--Ellen Glasgow

The years seem to rush by now, and I think of death as a fast approaching end of a journey—double and treble reasons for loving as well as working while it is day.

--George Eliot

One cannot be honest even at the end of one's life, for no one is wholly alone. We are bound to those we love, or to those who love us, and to those who need us to be brave, or content, or even happy enough to allow them not to worry about us. So we must refrain from giving pain, as our last gift to our fellows.

--Florida Scott-Maxwell

To be born is to start the journey towards death.

--Madeleine L'Engle

Down the street his funeral goes  
As sobs and wails diminish.  
He died from drinking straight shellac,  
But he had a lovely finish.

--Laura Majerus

I wanted to die quickly, not in little bits struggling for handholds.

--Jan Hudson

Around [A.D. 2500] we finally conquered death. Found out that it was a virus. But people still had to be—you know—moved out of the way so new people could be born. So we started doing it by lottery.

--Walter Dean Myers

All that stuff about happy endings is lies. The only ending in this world is death.

--Katherine Paterson

Finally I know what loss means. The power of the dead is that they leave you with the living.

--Richard Peck

There is no death, only a change of worlds.

--Chief Seattle

I'm not really dying today. No person ever died that had a family. I'll be around a long time.

--Ray Bradbury

There have always been five things people fear: war, disease, flood, hunger, and death. And of these, death has always been feared the most.

--Jerry Spinelli

Life is such a fragile thing and...painful though it might be, death is a part of life. Realizing this, accepting it, is a part of growing up.

--Allan W. Eckert

Love, I felt more than ever, is stronger than death and the fear of death.

--Ivan Turgenev

He who would teach men to die, would teach them to live.

--Montaigne

A happy life is when first you die, then your children die, then their children die.

--Chinese Proverb

And now my father, after a life of work,  
wears a hat of earth,  
and on top of that,  
a lighter one of cloud and sky—a hat of wind.

—Billy Collins

While grief is fresh, every attempt to divert only irritates. You must wait till it be digested, and then amusement will dissipate the remains of it.

-- Samuel Johnson

Death twitches my ear, 'Live,' he says, 'I am coming.'

--Virgil

To die is landing on some distant shore.

--John Dryden

Health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.

—*someecards.com*

They say such nice things about people at their funerals that it makes me sad that I'm going to miss mine by just a few days.

--Garrison Keillor

How short is human life! The very breath which frames my words accelerates my death.

--Hannah More

Until the day of his death, no man can be sure of his courage.

--Jean Anouilh

Life is pleasant. Death is peaceful. It's the transition that's troublesome.

--Isaac Asimov

There are worse things in life than death. Have you ever spent an evening with an insurance salesman?

--Woody Allen

Killing means active euthanasia. Allowing someone to die means withholding treatment so as not to prolong dying. This is the difference between blowing out the candle and allowing it to flicker out on its own. Either way the room is equally dark, but not as chilly.

--Carol Mackenzie  
Jackson

### **FROM 'FOR ANNIE'**

Thank Heaven! the crisis-  
The danger is past,  
And the lingering illness  
Is over at last-  
And the fever called 'Living'  
Is conquered at last.  
Sadly, I know  
I am shorn of my strength,  
And no muscle I move  
As I lie at full length-  
But no matter!-I feel  
I am better at length.

--Edgar A. Poe

Dying is a matter of slapstick and pratfalls. No one should grow old who isn't ready to appear ridiculous.

--John Mortimer

Some people are so afraid to die that they never begin to live.

--Henry Van Dyke

The only cure for grief is action.

--George Henry Lewes

People fear death even more than pain. It's strange that they fear death. Life hurts a lot more than death. At the point of death, the pain is over. Yeah, I guess it is a friend...

--Jim Morrison

I wouldn't mind dying in a plane crash. It'd be a good way to go. I don't want to die in my sleep, or of old age, or OD...I want to feel what it's like. I want to taste it, hear it, smell it. Death is only going to happen to you once; I don't want to miss it.

--Jim Morrison

The fear of death is the most unjustified of all fears, for there's no risk of accident for someone who's dead.

--Albert Einstein

If Shaw and Einstein couldn't beat death, what chance have I got? Practically none.

--Mel Brooks

Life is a path; Death a destination.

--Unknown

I don't believe in afterlife, although I am bringing a change of underwear.

--Woody Allen

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything—all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure—these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important...There is no reason not to follow your heart.

--Steve Jobs

I never wanted to see anybody die, but there are a few obituary notices I have read with pleasure.

--Clarence Darrow

We only get old if we're lucky!

--Roseanne Barr

I want to be fully present at death so that I might experience it actively rather than passively.

--Christopher Hitchens

I personally want to 'do' death in the active and not the passive, and to be there to look it in the eye and be doing something when it comes for me.

--Christopher Hitchens

I am dying as fast as my enemies, if I have any, could desire, and as easily and cheerfully as my best friends could desire.

--David Hume

He who dies with the most toys is still dead.

--*Church Marquee*

With the newspaper strike on, I wouldn't consider dying.

--Bette Davis

The older I get, the more intense my appetite for living and for appreciating life gets. I think I was heedless when I was younger. I thought it was endless. But I just lost two really close friends in the last two years, and, man, you realize you've got just seconds.

--Meryl Streep

Sorrow is about a hundred times heavier than a hospital bed.

--Larkin Warren

If you live long enough, you bury everyone you ever loved, which is too long, if you ask me.

--Larkin Warren's  
Grandmother

Figuring out how to not die is on my bucket list.

--Andy Borowitz

I want my life, but not at the expense of my children's.

--Dave Dignault

The machinery of modern American medicine is horribly efficient at preventing death and not efficient at helping families decide how far they want to take things. The old—the ones we want to protect—often become the victims.

--Katy Butler

When my father couldn't laugh anymore, when my mother couldn't laugh anymore, I knew their ties to the earth and the family they loved were frayed like old rope. Yet still they lived, in pain and confusion, unable to sever the rope, and none of us able to do it for them. When I can't laugh, when nobody can make me laugh, I'm...outta here. I think.

--Larkin Warren

Everyone should live to be 85 and then die peacefully, and it is just so sad when things don't work out that way.

--Nora Ephron

There's nothing to fear about death; it's a transition and we encounter beautiful comfort.

--Eben Alexander

Humans are not in the ballpark to be judging whether God or heaven exist. It's like trying to write a novel with only half the alphabet.

--Eben Alexander

There is no way to implement it [the death penalty] fairly. Despite all legal safeguards, whether one gets death or not is dependent on geography, the elected official with the power to seek it, the color of his skin, gender, the color of the victim's skin, the victim's gender, wealth of any of those, poverty of the defendant, mental health of any of those, and judges with agendas—not to mention the integrity of law enforcement, the competence of law enforcement, the competence of forensic analysts, and on and on.

--Diana Holt

Owing to medical advancements, cancer deaths now peak at age 65 and kill off just 20 percent of older Americans, while deaths due to organ failure peak at about 75 and kill of just another 25 percent, so the norm for seniors is becoming a long, drawn-out death after 85, requiring ever-increasing assistance for such simple daily activities as eating, bathing, and moving.

--Sandra Tsing Loh

Don't die until you're dead.

--Billy Connolly

I know that at the end of my mother's life I felt isolated in my plight, especially compared to colleagues being feted with showers and welcomed back to work with *oohs* and *aahs* at new baby pictures. I was tempted, out of pure small-mindedness, to put on my desk a photo of my mother, slumped in her wheelchair.

--Jane Gross

I am fighting to stay alive not because I fear death but because I love life.

--Edie Sundby, Cancer  
Survivor

Unwanted treatment is American medicine's dark continent. No one knows its extent, and few people want to talk about it. The U.S. medical system was built to treat anything that might be treatable, at any state of life—even near the end, when there is no hope of a cure, and when the patient, if fully informed, might prefer quality time and relative normalcy to all-out intervention.

--Jonathan Rauch

My father was suffering from an advanced and untreatable neurological condition that would soon kill him. Eating, drinking, and walking were all difficult and dangerous for him. He ate, drank, and walked anyway, because doing his best to lead a normal life sustained his morale and slowed his decline. 'Use it or lose it,' he often said. His strategy broke down calamitously when he agreed to be hospitalized for an MRI test. I can only liken his experience to an alien abduction. He was bundled into a bed, tied to tubes, and banned from walking without help or taking anything by mouth. No one asked him about what he wanted. After a few days, and a test that turned up nothing, he left the hospital no longer able to walk. Some weeks later, he managed to get back on his feet; unfortunately, by then he was only a few weeks from death. The episode had only one positive result. Disgusted and angry after his discharge from the hospital, my father turned to me and said, 'I am never going back there.' (He never did.)

--Jonathan Rauch

Sometimes you block the near exits, and all you've got left is a far exit, which is not a dignified and comfortable death.

--Albert Mulley,  
Physician

I get my exercise acting as a pallbearer to my friends who exercise.

--Chauncey Depew

The preciousness of life becomes especially profound when you've held a dying child in your arms and look into the faces of parents, their eyes weary from sleepless hours of pacing waiting rooms. I've witnessed the unbendable spirit of the children, whose strength and optimism burns within them. Only then do you understand the real and fragile beauty of life.

--Marlo Thomas

Even still, we run. We have not reached our average of 57.92 years without knowing that you run through it, and it hurts and you run through it some more, and if it hurts worse, you run through it even more, and when you finish, you will have broken through. In the end, when you are done, and stretching, and your heartbeat slows, and your sweat dries, if you've run through the hard part, you will remember no pain.

--Lauren Groff

We know, thanks to a growing body of research on suicide and the conditions that accompany it, that more and more of us are living through a time of seamless black: a period of mounting clinical depression, blossoming thoughts of oblivion and an abiding wish to get there by the non-scenic route. Every year since 1999, more Americans have killed themselves than the year before, making suicide the nation's greatest untamed cause of death. In much of the world, it's among the only major threats to get significantly worse in this century than in the last.

--Tony Dokoupil

Throughout the developed world, for example, self-harm is now the leading cause of death for people 15 to 49, surpassing all cancers and heart disease....Around the world, in 2010 self-harm took more lives than war, murder, and natural disasters combined, stealing more than 36 million years of healthy life across all ages.

--Tony Dokoupil

Where people lack basic services, they live unsanitary, impoverished lives, and death comes to visit long before it's invited. Where conditions improve, life expectancy does too, and somewhere in this transition there is a tipping point, a Rubicon beyond which death is no longer a bone-fingered stranger but the man in the mirror.

--Tony Dokoupil

Sociologists in general believe that when society robs people of self-control, individual dignity, or a connection to something larger than themselves, suicide rates rise.

--Tony Dokoupil

The desire to die begins with loneliness, a thwarted need for inclusion and connection. That explains why suicide rates rise by a third on the continuum from married to never been married. It also accords with the fact that divorced people suffer the greatest suicide risk, while twins have reduced risk and mothers of small children have close to the lowest risk. A mother of six has six times the protection of her childless counterpart....She may die of work and worry, but not of self-harm.

--Thomas Joiner

The life-saving power of belonging may help explain why, in America, blacks and Hispanics have long had much lower suicide rates than white people. They are more likely to be lashed together by poverty, and more enduringly tied by the bonds of faith and family. In the last decade, as suicide rates have surged among middle-aged whites, the risk for blacks and Hispanics of the same age has increased less than a point—although they suffer worse health by almost every other measure. There's an old joke in the black community, a nod to the curious power of poverty and oppression to keep suicide rates low. It's simple, really: you can't die by jumping from a basement window.

--Tony Dokoupil

Suicide isn't about cowardice. It's not painless or easy, like pulling the fire alarm to get out of math class. It takes a kind of courage, a fearless endurance that's not laudable, but certainly not weak or impulsive. On the contrary, suicide takes a slow habituation to pain, a numbness to violence. There is a heightened suicide risk shared by athletes, doctors, prostitutes, and bulimics, among others—anybody with a history of tamping down the body's instinct to scream, which goes a long way to unlocking the riddle of military suicides.

--Thomas Joiner

Suicide is the rare killer that fails to inspire celebrity PSAs, 5K runs, and shiny new university centers for study and treatment.

--Thomas Joiner

Time is like a drug. Too much of it kills you.

--Terry Pratchett

Get busy living, or get busy dying.

--Stephen King

Would you want to live to 120 if treatment could slow aging? Most Americans say 'No thanks,' says a Pew Research Center survey. Still, half were OK with 90; only 9 percent wanted to live past 100.

--AARP *Bulletin*

I know some day I'll move on. Everybody does. But I don't worry about it. I like where I am now. Everything's fine. And there's nothing I can do about anything that's happened. The only thing I have any control over is what's happening right now. So I don't worry about a while ago or after a while.

--Willie Nelson

Jutee van den Werff Ten Bosch has already had the talk with her 10-year-old son. Several times, in fact. No, not the sex talk. The euthanasia talk. 'Even if he said, 'I want to die', I'd support him,' she explained. 'I didn't put my children in the world for me. It's their life and their death. The best parents are the ones who let their children go.'

—*Newsweek*

I've always felt that if somebody can't go on living and creating the way they can, the way they're used to, and in healthy form, in which grandpapa was accustomed to, I accept the fact that he killed himself.

--Margaux Hemingway

Life is but a journey; death is returning home.

--Chinese proverb

Widows are divided into two classes; the bereaved and the relieved.

--Victor Robinson

Just because someone's dead doesn't mean it's over. My grandfather died more than 25 years ago, but I still think of him a lot and smell his smell.

--Julian Clary

O Death the Healer, scorn thou not, I pray,  
To come to me: of cureless ills thou art  
The one physician. Pain lays not its touch  
Upon a corpse.

--Aeschylus

You know the good part about all those executions in Texas? Fewer Texans.

--George Carlin

I don't believe in dying. It's been done. I'm working on a new exit. Besides, I can't die now - I'm booked.

—George Burns

## SHOULD YOU GO FIRST

Should you go first and I remain  
To walk the road alone,  
I'll live in memory's garden, dear,  
With happy days we've known.  
In spring I'll wait for roses red,  
When fades the lilac blue,  
In early fall, when brown leaves call  
I'll catch a glimpse of you.

Should you go first and I remain  
For battles to be fought,  
Each thing you've touched along the way  
Will be a hallowed spot.  
I'll hear your voice, I'll see your smile,  
Though blindly I may grope,  
The memory of your helping hand  
Will buoy me on with hope.

Should you go first and I remain  
To finish with the scroll,  
No length'ning shadows shall creep in  
To make this life seem droll.  
We've known so much of happiness,  
We've had our cup of joy,  
And memory is one gift of God  
That death cannot destroy.

Should you go first and I remain  
One thing I'd have you to do:  
Walk slowly down that long, lone path,  
For soon I'll follow you.  
I'll want to know each step you take  
That I may walk the same,  
For some day down that lonely road  
You'll hear me call your name.

—A. K. Rowswell

Death is nothing at all, I have only slipped away into the next room. I am I and you are you. Whatever we were to each other that we still are, call me by my old familiar name. Speak to me in the easy way which you always used—put no difference in your tone. Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow. Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together. Pray, smile, think of me, pray for me. Let my name be ever the household word that it always was. Let it be spoken without effort without the trace of a shadow in it. Life means all that it ever meant—it is the same as it ever was. There is unbroken continuity. Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight? I am waiting for you somewhere very near just around the corner. All is well.

--Henry Scott Holland

I think about dying. I've come to realize we all die alone in one way or another.

--Richard Pryor

How strange this fear of death is! We are never frightened at a sunset.

--George MacDonald

Nothing ever quite dies, it just comes back in a different form.

--Lester Bangs

Death is the enemy. I spent 10 years of my life singlemindedly studying, practicing, fighting hand to hand in close quarters to defeat the enemy, to send him back bloodied and humble and I am not going to roll over and surrender.

--Andrew Schneider

Sex and death are the only things that can interest a serious mind.

--William Butler Yeats

Every day I get the newspaper (which, for you younger readers, is a paper with news written on it) and I check the obituaries to see how many of that day's deceased were younger than I am. That gives me one number, which we will call X. Then I check the People page to see how many of the people who qualify as People and who have birthdays that day—indicating that they are still alive—are older than I am. This gives me another number, which we will also call X because at our age we have trouble remembering things. If the first X is smaller than the second X, then it would be a good morning of newspaper reading. But most of the time, the first X is bigger. Sometimes the second X is zero: Not a single People-worthy birthday person is older than I am. On those days, I put down the newspaper and slowly chew my soy-based meat free sausage with the realization that it could, statistically, be my last breakfast ever.

--Dave Barry

If you suppress grief too much, it can well redouble.

--Moliere

If anyone at my funeral has a long face, I'll never speak to him again.

--Stan Laurel

Everything that is necessary is also easy. You just have to accept it. And the most necessary, the most natural matter on this planet is death.

--Friedrich Durrenmatt

I don't think about legacy or epitaphs. I just think that you continue to live on in the hearts and memories of people who were with you, who loved you and whom you loved.

--Arianna Huffington

Some memories are realities, and are better than anything that can ever happen to one again.

--Willa Cather

When I am gone, release me—let me go  
I have so many things to see and do.  
You must not tie yourself to me with tears  
Be happy that we had so many years.  
I gave you love, you can only guess  
How much you gave me in happiness.  
I thank you for the love each have shown  
But now it is time I traveled alone.  
So grieve awhile for me if grieve you must  
Then let your grief be comforted by trust.  
It is only for a while that we must part  
So bless those memories within your heart.  
I will not be far away, for life goes on  
So if you need me, call and I will come.  
Though you cannot see or touch me, I will be near,  
And if you listen with your heart, you will hear—  
All of my love around you, soft and clear.  
Then when you must come this way alone,  
I will greet you with a smile and 'welcome home.'

--Unknown

According to most studies, people's number one fear is public speaking. Number two is death. This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than doing the eulogy.

--Jerry Seinfeld

The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch, which hurts and is desired.

--William Shakespeare

All my life flashed before my eyes.... It was really boring.

—*Chicken Run*

None of the abstract concepts comes closer to fulfilled utopia than that of eternal peace.

--Theodor Adorno

[Letter to mother, sister and fiancée on September 11, 1918, the day before the battle of Saint-Mihiel in France. 20-year-old David Kerr died the next day.]

Tomorrow the first totally American drive commences, and it gives me inexpressible joy and pride to know that I shall be present to do my share. Should I go under, therefore, I want you to know that I went without any terror of death, and that my chief worry is the grief my death will bring to those so dear to me.

Since having found myself and Mary, there has been much to make life sweet and glorious, but death, while distasteful, in no way terrible.

I feel wonderfully strong to do my share well, and, for my sake, you must try to drown your sorrow in the pride and satisfaction, the knowledge that I died well in so clean a cause, as is ours, should bring you. Remember how proud I have always been of your superb pluck, keep Elizabeth's future in mind, and don't permit my death to bow your head.

My personal belongings will all be sent to you. Your good taste will tell you which to send to Mary.

May God bless and keep you, dear heart, and be kind to little Elizabeth, and those others I love so well.

David.

The end.

— David Kerr

[Letter from 15-year-old Civil War drummer boy John Ross Wallar dictated from his hospital bed before he died.]

Dear Sister father Mother and friends

I recieved your letter but I don't think I Ever shall see another that you write this is Friday night But I don't think I woll Live to See Morning But My Kind friends I am a soldier of Christ I will Meet you all in Heven My Leg Has Bin taking of above My nee I am Dying at this time so don't Morn after Me fore I have Bleed and died fore My country May God Help you all to pray fore Me I want you all to Meet Me in Heven above Dear Sister you wanted to Know if My Leg would be Stiff God Bless Your Soul Sister I will be Stiff all over be four twenty four ours My wound Dresser is writing this Letter fore Me when you get this Letter write to Alexander Nelan fore I wont Live till Morning so good By My Friends May God be with you all good by God Bless My poor Soul.

--John Ross Wallar

[20-year-old Tommie Kennedy wrote from a Japanese prisoner of war camp during World War II]

Momie & Dad: It is pretty hard to check out this way with out a fighting chance but we can't live forever. I'm not afraid to die, I just hate the thought of not seeing you again. Buy Turkey Ranch with my money and just think of me often while your there. Make liberberal donations to both sisters. See that Gary has a new car his first year hi-school.

I am sending Walts medals to his mother. He gave them to me Sept 42 last time I saw him & Bud. They went to Japan. I guess you can tell Patty that fate just didn't want us to be together. Hold a nice service for me in Bksfield & put head stone in new cemetary. Take care of my nieces & nephews don't let them ever want anything as I want even warmth or water now.

Loving & waiting for you in the world beon.

Your son,

Lt. Tommie Kennedy

— Tommie Kennedy

[In March of 2002 Sgt. Josh Harapko wrote from Afganistan. Harapko subsequently died in a Blackhawk helicopter crash.]

I'm writing this letter before I leave. I couldn't say what I wanted to over the phone. First I want to say I love you so much. You were always there for me even though I would never talk about my problems. Second you gave me the options to be a man giving me slack in the rope to try to make the right decisions. No matter what you always believed in me, no matter how much of a punk I was to you. We are leaving for Bahgram to flush out 600 Taliban soldiers from the mountains. This is the biggest battle of the war on terrorism. We already sustained 30 casualties and one KIA....

I don't want you to worry about me. (I know you will cause I'm your son). Mom I'm not afraid to die for something that is right...I just hope that I made you proud, and if I don't come home for any reason I just want you to know I'll always be with you....I want you to know you raised the cream of the crop....Well Mom I have to go now, all that I have said here are words from my heart and I mean every last one of them. Tell Aunt Joyce I said hi and I love her. I hope to see you soon but if that doesn't work out I just needed you to know how I felt. I Love you and Miss you. Take care your always in my thoughts.  
Your loving son Josh

--Josh Harapko

Death is not the end. There remains the litigation over the estate.

--Ambrose Bierce

Just like those who are incurably ill, the aged know everything about their dying except exactly when.

--Philip Roth

Always so loving, thoughtful and kind,  
what beautiful memories you leave behind.  
You may have left this world behind,  
But you will never leave our hearts and mind.

--Unknown

You did not want to leave us,  
But you did not go alone.  
For part of us went with you,  
The day God called you home (or)  
The day that you went home  
Deep in my heart memories will be kept,  
To love and cherish and never forget.

--Unknown

There is a place in my heart,  
That is yours alone,  
A part of my life that no one else can own.  
Tears in my eyes will wipe away,  
But the love in my heart  
Is there to stay.

--Unknown

You left us, and yet you stayed,  
You walk beside us every day.

--Unknown

So suddenly you were taken,  
We could not say goodbye.  
All we have are memories  
That will never die.

--Unknown

God saw that you were weary,  
The hill too steep to climb,  
He gently closed your tired eyes,  
And whispered 'Peace be thine'  
A tender thought brings a tear,  
A silent wish that you were here.

--Unknown

When family chains are broken,  
Nothing is the same,  
But as God takes us one by one,  
He links the chain again.

--Unknown

The tide of life ebbs and flows,  
But the gates of memory never close.

--Unknown

Those we love remain with us  
for love itself lives on,  
And cherished memories never fade  
Because a love one's gone. . .  
Those we love can never be  
more than a thought apart  
For as long as there is memory,  
They'll live on in the heart.

--Unknown

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better whether by healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Fill not your heart with pain and sorrow,  
But remember me in every tomorrow...  
Remember the joy, the laughter,  
the smiles,  
I've only gone to rest a little while.  
Although my leaving  
causes pain and grief  
My going has eased my hurt  
And given me relief.  
So dry your eyes and remember me,  
Not as I am now, but as I used to be.  
Because I will remember you all  
And look on with a smile.  
Understand in your hearts  
I've only gone to rest a little while.

--Unknown

When you plant seeds  
in the lives of others  
And water them with love and care  
You will reap a harvest  
of sweet memories  
That will follow you everywhere.

--Unknown

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

--Unknown

Even if we are dead we help each other in some little way.

--Dave Davies

Death leaves a heartache no one can heal,  
Love leaves a memory no one can steal.

--Irish Headstone

The life of the dead is placed in the memory of the living.

--Marcus Tullius Cicero

It's a non-stop invention, this game of life, and as soon as you think you've got it,  
you lose it.

--Tim Finn

One of the marks of existence is impermanence. My knowing about death makes my  
life more alive. It's a reality for all of us. We're all going to end at some point. So  
yeah, I do think about it. I'm 66-years-old. I don't consider myself old, but I came  
from the generation of 'don't trust anyone over 30.' I try to acknowledge death and  
not live as though I'm going to live forever.

--Natalie Goldberg

When I retire or pass away, I will be able to look back and say that this has been an  
exciting life. That's all that matters.

--Martin Yan

God looked around his garden  
And He found an empty place.  
He then looked down upon this 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 that the road was getting rough.  
And the hills are hard to climb,  
So He closed your weary eyelids  
And whispered 'Please be thine.'  
It broke our hearts to lose you  
But you didn't go alone  
For part of us went with you  
That day that God called you home.

—Unknown

In the democracy of the dead all men at last are equal. There is neither rank nor station nor prerogative in the republic of the grave.

--John James Ingalls

No one here gets out alive.

--Jim Morrison

Dying wouldn't be that sad or frightening if only we didn't know it was going to happen. But alas, we are, as far as we can tell, the only creatures who are aware of their own mortality. Most animals you could kill right in front of their friends and they would just keep on chewin' their cud, at most idly wondering, a few days later, where Frank was. But we humans know the horrible truth. That is the price we pay for consciousness, and many would argue that we got ripped off.

--*Earth (The Book) A  
Visitor's Guide to  
the Human Race*

It is only by accepting the fleeting nature of our existence that we can fully appreciate how much every moment, just like every person and every snowflake, is unique and precious.

*--Earth (The Book) A  
Visitor's Guide to  
the Human Race*

Death, it is often observed, is just another part of life. Usually this observation is made right after someone dies, and mostly because we don't know what else to say and don't want to be rude. While the rites associated with death are ostensibly performed for the benefit of the dead, in reality they serve to provide the survivors with the comfort, guidance and tranquility, needed to complete their own journey to the unfortunate day when their rib cage becomes gopher housing.

*--Earth (The Book) A  
Visitor's Guide to  
the Human Race*

A will is a way of assuring one's legacy of family divisiveness extends beyond the grave.

*--Earth (The Book) A  
Visitor's Guide to  
the Human Race*

When a person dies, his family, friends and a sallow-cheeked formaldehyde-scented man they just met organizes a funeral. This ceremony is a chance for the living to say goodbye, albeit a few days too late. With his body looking on, the departed will be eulogized, his good points emphasized, his bad points glossed over, his soul's current whereabouts confidently asserted. This provides the bereaved with closure, and the unbereaved with credit for showing up.

*--Earth (The Book) A  
Visitor's Guide to  
the Human Race*

As confident as the human species is that after death, a Higher power awaits us in an eternal utopia filled with everyone we've ever known and/or virgins, one thing we all fear is death. And although we never quite succeed in conquering the Grim Reaper, we do manage to confuse and delay him, allowing many of us to enjoy up to twenty extra years of feeble dependence.

*--Earth (The Book) A  
Visitor's Guide to  
the Human Race*

When you die at 72, no matter what you die of, it's natural causes. Even if you get hit by a truck... 'cause if you was younger, you'd have got out the way!

--Chris Rock

We can come to look upon the deaths of our enemies with as much regret as we feel for those of our friends, namely, when we miss their existence as witnesses to our success.

--Arthur Schopenhauer

I can imagine myself on my death-bed, spent utterly with lust to touch the next world, like a boy asking for his first kiss from a woman.

--Aleister Crowley

Living and dying is not the big issue. The big issue is what you're going to do with your time while you are here.

--Bill T. Jones

People want the right to die at a time of their own choosing. Too many families have watched helplessly as a relative dies slowly, longing for death.

--Polly Toynebee

It is difficult to accept death in this society because it is unfamiliar. In spite of the fact that it happens all the time, we never see it.

--Elisabeth  
Kübler-Ross

The happy married man dies in good stile at home, surrounded by his weeping wife and children. The old bachelor don't die at all—he sort of rots away, like a polly-wog's tail.

--Artemus Ward

I'll die young, but it's like kissing God.

--Lenny Bruce

We always knew how to honor fallen soldiers. They were killed for our sake, they went out on our mission. But how are we to mourn a random man killed in a terrorist attack while sitting in a cafe? How do you mourn a housewife who got on a bus and never returned?

--A. B. Yehoshua

I do not regard it as wrong to take my life, because I simply change my place of residence and go where my wife and baby are.

--Alex Campbell

The human ethical belief that death should be postponed as long as possible does not exist in nature.

—Felipe Sierra

I have actively opposed legalizing euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide. People who want to die in one of these ways tend to suffer not from unremitting pain but from depression, hopelessness, and fear of losing their dignity and control. The people they leave behind inevitably feel they have somehow failed. The answer to these symptoms is not ending a life but getting help. I have long argued that we should focus on giving all terminally ill people a good, compassionate death—not euthanasia or assisted suicide for a tiny minority.

—Ezekiel J. Emanuel

Americans seem to be obsessed with exercising, doing mental puzzles, consuming various juice and protein concoctions, sticking to strict diets, and popping vitamins and supplements, all in a valiant effort to cheat death and prolong life as long as possible. This has become so pervasive that it now defines a cultural type: what I call the American immortal.

—Ezekiel J. Emanuel

Over the past 50 years, health care hasn't slowed the aging process so much as it had slowed the dying process.

—Eileen Crimmins

Unless there has been terrible abuse, no child wants his or her parents to die. It is a huge loss at any age. It creates a tremendous, unfillable hole. But parents also cast a big shadow for most children. Whether estranged, disengaged, or deeply loving, they set expectations, render judgments, impose their opinions, interfere, and are generally a looming presence for even adult children. This can be wonderful. It can be annoying. It can be destructive. But it is inescapable as long as the parent is alive. Examples abound in life and literature: Lear, the quintessential Jewish mother, the Tiger Mom. And while children can never fully escape this weight even after a parent dies, there is much less pressure to conform to parental expectations and demands after they are gone.

—Ezekiel J. Emanuel

I feel monotony and death to be almost the same.

—Charlotte Bronte

Our children won't admit it. They love us and fear the loss that will be created by our death. And a loss it will be. A huge loss. They don't want to confront our mortality, and they certainly don't want to wish for our death. But even if we manage not to become burdens to them, our shadowing them until their old age is also a loss. And leaving them—and our grandchildren—with memories framed not by our vivacity but by our frailty is the ultimate tragedy.

—Ezekiel J. Emanuel

Pneumonia may well be called the friend of the aged. Taken off by it in an acute, short, not often painful illness, the old man escapes those 'cold gradations of decay' so distressing to himself and to his friends.

—Sir William Osler

Many of us have suppressed, actively or passively, thinking about God, heaven and hell, and whether we return to the worms. We are agnostics or atheists, or just don't think about whether there is a God and why she should care at all about mere mortals. We also avoid constantly thinking about the purpose of our lives and the mark we will leave. Is making money, chasing the dream, all worth it? Indeed, most of us have found a way to live our lives comfortably without acknowledging, much less answering, these big questions on a regular basis. We have gotten into a productive routine that helps us ignore them.

—Ezekiel J. Emanuel

Death is the ugly fact which Nature has to hide, and she hides it well.

—Alexander Smith

To save a man's life against his will is the same as killing him.

—Horace

For people to argue against this choice [death with dignity] for sick people really seems evil to me. They try to mix it up with suicide and that's really unfair, because there's not a single part of me that wants to die. But I am dying.

—Brittany Maynard

My work is done, why wait?

—*Kodak* founder George Eastman, in His Suicide Note

Killing yourself is a major commitment, it takes a kind of courage. Most people just lead lives of cowardly desperation. It's kinda half suicide where you just dull yourself with substances.

—Robert Crumb

It is the unknown we fear when we look upon death and darkness, nothing more.

—J. K. Rowling

There should be weeping at a man's birth, not at his death.

—Charles Louis de  
Secondat  
Montesquieu

Suicidal glory is the luxury of the irresponsible. We're not giving up. We're waiting for a better opportunity to win.

—Lois McMaster Bujold

I'd like a marker, maybe back in Dayton -- a parking meter that says: 'Expired.'... And then for a quarter, I'd talk to you.

—Jonathan Winters

The best reason for moving on/out is to give the next generation a chance! We Baby Boomers have already commanded the cultural stage ad nauseam. There's no need to endlessly oppress those behind us with our slow parade of dying.

—John Barnowski

As a physician, I feel awash in the decrepitude of patients who desire just one more medical procedure to extend their bionic existence. No one discusses the ethics of therapeutic intervention, simply the mechanics of medication, surgery, hospitalization. I had hoped that the rise in palliative-care services would help channel elderly, chronically ill patients to a more natural death. As a society, we cannot support this current trend toward eternal existence, either financially or emotionally.

—Mary Kemen, M.D.

Why must a terminally ill cancer patient suffer an agonizing decline when there is a more merciful alternative? Why, and this is a harder question, must an Alzheimer's patient be condemned to slowly lose mental and physical capacities? Facing that terrible situation, I would prefer the choice not to be remembered...as 'feeble, ineffectual, even pathetic.'

—Ruth Marcus

Because I have loved life, I shall have no sorrow to die.

—Amelia Burr

The sorrow for the dead is the only sorrow from which we refuse to be divorced. Every other wound we seek to heal—every other affliction to forget: but this wound we consider it a duty to keep open—this affliction we cherish and brood over in solitude.

—Washington Irving

Suicidal glory is the luxury of the irresponsible. We're not giving up. We're waiting for a better opportunity to win.

—Lois McMaster Bujold

Dying is an art, like everything else. I do it exceptionally well. I do it so it feels like hell. I do it so it feels real. I guess you could say I've a call.

—Sylvia Plath

Sometimes even to live is an act of courage.

—Lucius Annaeus Seneca

Never does one feel oneself so utterly helpless as in trying to speak comfort for great bereavement. I will not try it. Time is the only comforter for the loss of a mother.

—Jules Renard

Being cremated is my last hope for a smoking hot body.

—T-Shirt Slogan

You're all gonna die. Then you'll be dead for way longer than you're alive, like, that's mostly what you're ever gonna be. You're just dead people that didn't die yet.

— Louis C. K.

No matter how big your house is, how recent your car is, or how big your bank account is, our graves will always be the same size. Stay humble.

—Internet Meme

Mirrors: Just a livestream of you slowly dying.

—Internet Meme

Every person sees the world in a unique way. When someone dies it is, in a way, the death of an entire world.

—Unknown

I didn't put my children in the world for me. It's their life and their death. The best parents are the ones who let their children go. Children with terminal diseases like cancer mature much faster than other children. They think a lot about their life and death and how they'd like their death to be. And sometimes they're more courageous than their parents.

—Jutte van den Werff  
Ten Bosch

It is curious, but till that moment I had never realized what it means to destroy a healthy, conscious man. When I saw the prisoner step aside to avoid the puddle, I saw the mystery, the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting a life short when it is in full tide. This man was not dying, he was alive just as we were alive...

His eyes saw the yellow gravel and the grey walls, and his brain still remembered, foresaw, reasoned--reasoned even about puddles. He and we were a party of men walking together, seeing, hearing, feeling, understanding the same world; and in two minutes, with a sudden snap, one of us would be gone--one mind less, one world less.

—George Orwell

The man who kills himself, kills all men; as far as he is concerned he wipes out the world. His act is worse (symbolically considered) than any rape or dynamite outrage. For it destroys all buildings: it insults all women. The thief is satisfied with diamonds; but the suicide is not: that is his crime. He cannot be bribed, even by the blazing stones of the Celestial City. The thief compliments the things he steals, if not the owner of them. But the suicide insults everything on earth by not stealing it. He defiles every flower by refusing to live for its sake. There is not a tiny creature in the cosmos at whom his death is not a sneer. When a man hangs himself on a tree, the leaves might fall off in anger and the birds fly away in fury: for each has received a personal affront....'The man's crime is different from other crimes—for it makes even crimes impossible.'

—G. K. Chesterton

I will be the last person to die in my lifetime.

—*theChive*

We cannot tear out a single page of our life, but we can throw the whole book in the fire.

—George Sand

Death, the final, triumphant lover.

—Bela Lugosi

I felt like my heart had been so thoroughly and irreparably broken that there could be no real joy again, that at best there might eventually be a little contentment. Everyone wanted me to get help and rejoin life, pick up the pieces and move on, and I tried to, I wanted to, but I just had to lie in the mud with my arms wrapped around myself, eyes closed, grieving, until I didn't have to anymore.

—Anne Lamott

Death is a challenge. It tells us not to waste time... It tells us to tell each other right now that we love each other.

—Leo Buscaglia

Don't send me flowers when I'm dead. If you like me, send them while I'm alive.

—Brian Clough

It is an infamy to die and not be missed.

—Carlos Wilcox

Death is less bitter punishment than death's delay.

—Ovid

Nothing endears so much a friend as sorrow for his death. The pleasure of his company has not so powerful an influence.

—David Hume

Be ashamed to die unless you have won some victory for humanity.

—Horace Mann

Since the day of my birth, my death began its walk. It is walking toward me, without hurrying.

—Jean Cocteau

The only completely consistent people are the dead.

—Aldous Huxley

When I fall down now, I break. I've broken an arm and my pelvis. The death of my friend Nora Ephron was a reminder of how quick this whole journey is. Life goes slowly, but in the end it rips by in a New York minute. You're here one minute, and it's a dirt bath the next. I still don't know how to come to terms with it.

—Candice Bergen

I have been an incredibly lucky girl. which is why when a big shadow falls—going through a severe terminal illness with a loved one—it feels like the rug is being pulled out from under you, as if to say, ‘Now we’re going to give you the real stuff.’ That’s how the universe works. Life is wondrously and appallingly surprising. Anyone who doesn’t know that is unarmed.

—Candice Bergen

There is no worse sorrow than remembering happiness in the day of sorrow.

—Alfred de Musset

Yes, you can lose somebody overnight, yes, YOUR whole life can be turned upside down. Life is short. It can come and go like a feather in the wind.

—Shania Twain

Dear World, I am leaving because I am bored. I feel I have lived long enough. I am leaving you with your worries in this sweet cesspool. Good luck.

—George Sanders

When tomorrow starts without me,  
And I’m not there to see;  
If the sun should rise and find your eyes  
All filled with tears for me;  
I know how much you love me  
As much as I love you,  
And each time that you think of me,  
I know you’ll miss me too;  
So when tomorrow starts without me,  
Don’t think we’re far apart,  
For every time you think of me,  
I’m right here, in your heart.

—David Romano

The prevalence of suicide, without doubt, is a test of height in civilization; it means that the population is winding up its nervous and intellectual system to the utmost point of tension and that sometimes it snaps.

—Henry Ellis

Death never takes the wise man by surprise; he is always ready to go.

—Jean de La Fontaine

Death is psychologically as important as birth. I am convinced that it is hygienic—if I may use the word—to discover in death a goal towards which one can strive, and that shrinking away from it is something unhealthy and abnormal which robs the second half of life of its purpose.

--Carl G. Jung

Whether our parents live near or far, are emotionally close or distant, they anchor us in the world. Even though we know they will die someday, most of us can't fathom a world without them. Can you imagine a world without a sky? Of course not. It has always been there.

—David Kessler

Sudden death compounds the loss. That's because there is no preparation, no goodbye, just the loudest absence one could ever imagine. As a result, in sudden death, the denial will be longer and deeper. The more sudden the death, the longer it may take to grieve the loss.

—David Kessler

Hanging is perhaps the quintessential American punishment. In the pre-revolutionary era, criminals were also shot, pressed between heavy stones, broken on the wheel, or burned alive. (An estimated 16,000 people have been put to death in this country since the first recorded execution, in 1608.) But the simplicity of the noose triumphed, and its use spread as the republic grew. In theory, a hanging is quick and relatively painless: the neck snaps immediately. But hangings can be grisly. If the rope is too short, the noose will slowly strangle the condemned. If the rope is too long, the force of the fall can decapitate the person.

—Matt Ford

If I had a single flower for every time I think about you, I could walk forever in my garden.

—Claudia Grandi

The real question is not whether life exists after death. The real question is whether you are alive before death.

—Osho

He that outlives a wife whom he has long loved, sees himself disjoined from the only mind that has the same hopes and fears and interest...The continuity of being is lacerated.

—Samuel Johnson

People living deeply have no fear of death.

—Anais Nin

If life must not be taken too seriously, then so neither must death.

—Samuel Butler

Let us eat and drink neither forgetting death unduly nor remembering it. The Lord hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, etc., and the less we think about it the better.

—Samuel Butler

To die is but to leave off dying and do the thing once for all.

—Samuel Butler

Death is as casual—and often as unexpected—as birth. It is as difficult to define grief as joy. Each is finite. Each will fade.

—Jim Bishop

And soon, too soon, we part with pain,  
To sail o'er silent seas again.

—Thomas Moore

I believe that time destroys everything. You can take one beautiful apple, red. After a while, it becomes shriveled and full of worms, just like what happens to us.

—Monica Bellucci

Why do we kill people who kill people to show that killing people is wrong?

—Holly Near

Grief knits two hearts in closer bonds than happiness ever can; and common sufferings are far stronger links than common joys.

—Alphonse de  
Lamartine

Women are twice as likely to initiate a suicide attempt but men are four times more likely to succeed.

—*theChive*

The memory of your loved one will one day bring a smile to your lips before it brings a tear to your eye.

—Joe Biden

## **TRIAD**

These be  
Three silent things:  
The falling snow...the hour  
Before the dawn...the mouth of one  
Just dead.

—Adelaide Crapsey

Loved. You can't use it in the past tense. Death does not stop that love at all.

—Ken Kesey

Death is the golden key that opens the palace of eternity.

—John Milton

When you are dead, you don't even know that you are dead. It's only pain for others.

—Bill Nye

We are all terminal cases.

—Gregory Maguire

Dead people receive more flowers than the living ones because regret is stronger than gratitude.

—Anne Frank

I never wanted to see anybody die, but there are a few obituary notices I have read with pleasure.

—Clarence Darrow

From my rotting body, flowers shall grow and I am in them and that is eternity.

—Edvard Munch

The monuments of the nations are all protests against nothingness after death; so are statues and inscriptions; so is history.

—Lew Wallace

One day you'll be just a memory for some people. Do your best to be a good one.

—Unknown

## **DON'T SAY GOODBYE**

don't say goodbye  
For that is wrong  
don't say goodbye  
I have not gone  
don't say goodbye  
For I am still here  
don't say goodbye  
I am always near  
don't say goodbye  
I am here with you  
don't say goodbye  
I will help you through  
don't say goodbye  
I am never far away  
don't say goodbye  
I am there each day  
don't say goodbye  
Though you don't see  
don't say goodbye  
I am here its me  
don't say goodbye  
It is not true  
don't say goodbye  
I would never leave you  
don't say goodbye  
I am somewhere greater  
It's not goodbye  
But see you later

—John F. Connor

Death is no more than passing from one room into another. But there's a difference for me, you know. Because in that other room I shall be able to see.

—Helen Keller

We can consciously end our life almost anytime we choose. This ability is an endowment, like laughing and blushing, given to no other animal... in any given moment, by not exercising the option of suicide, we are choosing to live.

—Peter McWilliams

Each victim of suicide gives his act a personal stamp which expresses his temperament, the special conditions in which he is involved, and which, consequently, cannot be explained by the social and general causes of the phenomenon.

—Emile Durkheim

If there ever comes a day where we can't be together, keep me in your heart. I'll stay there forever.

—Winnie the Pooh

Death is not only an unusually severe punishment, unusual in its pain, in its finality and in its enormity, but it serves no penal purpose more effectively than a less severe punishment.

—William J. Brennan

Charlie Brown: Some day, we will all die, Snoopy!  
Snoopy: True, but on all the other days, we will not.

—Charles Schulz

Grief never ends...but it changes. It's a passage, not a place to stay. Grief is not a sign of weakness, not a lack of faith...It is the price of love.

—Unknown

It is often said that before you die your life passes before your eyes. It is in fact true. It's called living.

—Terry Pratchett

Criminals do not die by the hands of the law. They die by the hands of other men.

—George Bernard Shaw

Death does not exist. People only die when they are forgotten; if you remember me, then I will always be with you.

—Isabel Allende

You don't go around grieving all the time, but the grief is still there and always will be.

—Nigella Lawson

If you eat healthy, sleep well, go to the gym and drink a lot of water, you gonna die anyways.

—Unknown

## TEACH ME TO DIE

Sunlight filters through my window.  
Falling from the sky.  
Time slips like a silent stranger  
Softly passing by.  
Life goes on in busy circles.  
Leaving me behind.  
Memories, like portraits.  
Fill the attic of my mind.  
Teach me to die. Hold onto my hand.  
I have so many questions.  
Things I don't understand.  
Teach me to die. Give all you can give.  
If you'll teach me of dying.  
I will teach you to live!  
I know that it isn't easy  
Seeing me this way.  
And it hurts to watch me  
Lying here day after day.  
Trade your fear of parting  
For the faith that knows no pain.  
Don't be afraid to say goodbye!  
I know we'll meet again!

—Joseph R. Larsen

The most important thing I think I know about suicide is that you have to talk about it—you have to open yourself up to what you're feeling. Other people can't say, 'Don't talk about that anymore—it's been six months.' But it's something that never leaves you. And why shouldn't I talk about it? It's my story. He was my son.

—Judy Collins

Some 35,000 Americans commit suicide every year. Depression is a leading cause of disability—the leading cause, according to the World Health Organization.

—Dan Hurley [2015]

Suicide clusters—defined as multiple deaths in close succession and proximity—feed on viral news, which feeds on social connections.

—Dan Hurley

Almost by definition, suicide points to underlying psychological vulnerability. The thinking behind it is often obsessive and then impulsive; a kid can be ruminating about the train for a long time and then one night something ordinary—a botched quiz, a breakup—leads him or her to the tracks.

—Hanna Rosin

One thing that puts a kid at risk is someone else's suicide. The scariest thing kids told me is that now, in one student's phrasing, 'suicide is one of the options.'

—Hanna Rosin

I'm expected to know the answers to questions such as why people kill themselves. And myself and my friends, we often, when we're relaxing, admit that we really don't have a good idea of why people kill themselves

—David Lester,  
Psychology  
Professor and  
Suicide Authority

People die all the time. Life is a lot more fragile than we think. So you should treat others in a way that leaves no regrets. Fairly, and if possible, sincerely. It's too easy not to make the effort, then weep and wring your hands after the person dies.

—Haruki Murakami

How quick, brutal, and fragile is life. You are born, you live a few years in wild hope, then you are dragged back into the night. You might have breathed on a little longer, had you not dared think yourself a human creature instead of an engine of muscle and bone.

—Donna Gillespie

People don't die from suicide; they die from sadness.

—*www.HealthyPlace.com*

No one can tell what goes on in between the person you were and the person you become. No one can chart that blue and lonely section of hell. There are no maps of the change. You just come out the other side...Or you don't.

—Stephen King

Survivors: Sentenced to a life of grief with no parole.

—Diane Sawyer

That though the radiance which was once so bright be now forever taken from my sight. Though nothing can bring back the hour of splendor in the grass, glory in the flower. We will grieve not, rather find strength in what remains behind.

—William Wordsworth

We hold on so tightly, because we're terrified of loss. We hold on till our hands bleed. And in that self-shattering persistence, we fail to see the answer: Just let go.

—Yasmin Mogahed

On the day I die, the few people who really know and truly love me will grieve deeply.

They will feel a void.

They will feel cheated.

They will not feel ready.

They will feel as though a part of them has died as well.

And on that day, more than anything in the world they will want more time with me.

I know this from those I love and grieve over.

And so knowing this, while I am still alive I'll try to remember that my time with them is finite and fleeting and so very precious—and I'll do my best not to waste a second of it.

I'll try not to squander a priceless moment worrying about all the other things that will happen on the day I die, because many of those things are either not my concern or beyond my control.

Friends, those other things have an insidious way of keeping you from living even as you live; vying for your attention, competing for your affections.

They rob you of the joy of this unrepeatable, uncontainable, ever-evaporating Now with those who love you and want only to share it with you.

Don't miss the chance to dance with them while you can.

It's easy to waste so much daylight in the days before you die.

Don't let your life be stolen every day by all that you believe matters, because on the day you die, much of it simply won't.

Yes, you and I will die one day.

But before that day comes: let us live.

—John Pavlovitz

A son can bear with equanimity the loss of his father, but the loss of his inheritance may drive him to despair.

—Niccolo Machiavelli

Don't go to your funeral until the day of your funeral.

—Valerie Harper

Lay down  
Your tired & weary head my friend.  
We have wept too long  
Night is falling  
And you are only sleeping

We have come to this journey's end  
It's time for us to go  
To meet our friends  
Who beckon us  
To jump again

From across a distant sky  
AC-130 comes to carry us  
Where we shall all wait  
For the final green light

In the light of  
The pale moon rising  
I see far on the horizon  
Into the world of night and darkness  
Feet and knees together

Time has ceased  
But cherished memories still linger  
This is the way of life and all things  
We shall meet again  
You are only sleeping.

—José N. Harris

That which is so universal as death must be a benefit.

—Friedrich Schiller

I don't think kids have a problem with death. It's us older ones who are nearer to it,  
that start being frightened.

—Helena Bonham Carter

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

—Dylan Thomas

But when it really happens I'm very fascinated, I'm waiting for the moment,  
because the moment where life abandons you and death steps in, that moment  
must be fantastic, no?

—Nastassja Kinski

I am not sure exactly what heaven will be like, but I don't know that when we die  
and it comes time for God to judge us, he will NOT ask, 'How many good things  
have you done in your life,' rather he will ask, 'How much LOVE did you put into  
what you did?'

—Mother Theresa

We were equals once when we lay new-born babes on our nurse's knees. We will be  
equal again when they tie up our jaws for the last sleep.

—Olive Schreiner

You realize how much you truly miss someone when something happens, good or  
bad, and the only person you want to tell is the one person who isn't there.

—Unknown

Oscar Wilde's last words: 'This wallpaper and I are fighting a duel to the death.  
Either it goes or I do.'

—Oscar Wilde

O. Henry appeared to have stopped breathing, but was he really dead? Touch his  
feet, suggested one of the mourners clustered around his bed: Nobody ever died with  
warm feet. Whereupon, the short-story writer raised his head from the pillow,  
mumbled 'Joan of Arc did,' and fell back dead.

—Sandra Martin

The main 'why' of suicide is mental illness.

—Allyna Mota Melville

Now we lie here in the river pastures:  
We lie in the mowings under the thick turf:  
We hear the earth and the all-day rasp of the grasshoppers.

—Archibald MacLeish

I'm sending a dove to heaven  
With a parcel on its wings.  
Be careful when you open it.  
It's full of beautiful things.  
Inside are a million kisses  
Wrapped up in a million hugs,  
To say how much I miss you  
And to send you all my love.  
I hold you close within my heart  
And there you will remain,  
to walk with me throughout my life  
Until I see you again.

—Unknown

Death lays his icy hand on kings:  
    Sceptre and Crown  
    Must tumble down,  
And in the dust be equal made  
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

—James Shirley

When I am dead and over me bright April  
    Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,  
Though you should lean above me broken-hearted,  
    I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful  
    When rain bends down the bough;  
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted  
    Than you are now.

—Sara Teasdale

'Our dearest one is gone.' The poorer ones  
used wood for markers. Their names  
got weaker every winter. Now gray wood  
offers a blank sacrifice to rot.

—Richard Hugo

I have no idea whether we live again.  
It doesn't seem likely  
from either the scientific or the philosophical point of view  
but certainly all things are possible to you....  
Whatever your end may be, accept my amazement.  
May I stand until death forever at attention  
for any your least instruction or enlightenment.  
I even feel sure you will assist me again, Master of insight & beauty.  
—John Berryman

We are comfortable with the fact that we cannot know personally what happened in  
the world before we were born, yet we are uncomfortable with the notion that we  
will stop engaging with time at some point in the future.  
—John Barton

I intend to live forever, or die trying.  
—Groucho Marx

What do you call a woman who knows where her husband is every night?  
A widow.  
—Unknown

When a mother dies, a daughter's mourning never completely ends.  
—Hope Edelman

Death be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so,  
For, those, whom thou thinkst, thou dost overthrow,  
die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.  
—John Donne

The 'kingdom of Heaven' is a condition of the heart—not something that comes  
'upon the earth' or 'after death.'  
—Friedrich Nietzsche

The good die young--because they see it's no use living if you've got to be good.  
—John Barrymore

## GRIEF

I had my own notion of grief.  
I thought it was the sad time  
That followed the death of someone you love.  
And you had to push through it  
To get to the other side.  
But I'm learning there is no other side.  
There is no pushing through.  
But rather,  
There is absorption.  
Adjustment.  
Acceptance.  
And grief is not something you complete,  
But rather, you endure.  
Grief is not a task to finish  
And move on,  
But an element of yourself-  
An alteration of your being.  
A new way of seeing.  
A new definition of self.

—Gwen Flowers

The idea is to die young as late as possible.

—Ashley Montagu

Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time.

—Henry Wadsworth  
Longfellow

The goal is to die with memories, not dreams.

—Unknown

The face of war is the face of death; death is not an inevitable part of every order that a wartime leader gives. The decision to use the atomic bomb was a decision that brought death to over a hundred thousand Japanese....But this deliberate, premeditated destruction was our least abhorrent choice.

—Henry L. Stimpson

What would be the use of immortality to a person who cannot use well a half hour?  
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Life's a struggle, and throughout our journey, in various ways, Life batters us all. In the end, we can only hope for happiness, a sense of fulfillment, and serenity.  
—Dan L. Miller

Live each day as though it were your last: one day you're sure to be right.  
—Harry Morant in  
*Breaker Morant*

You only live twice. Once when you are born and once when you look death in the face.  
—Ian Fleming

B. P. 'Pearl' Roberts, a well-known hypochondriac in Key West, Florida, on her gravestone: 'I told you I was sick.'  
—Dan Hunsberger

90% of people who die by suicide have a diagnosable and treatable psychiatric disorder at the time of their death.  
—*American Foundation  
for Suicide  
Prevention*

I think the hardest part of losing someone, isn't having to say goodbye, but rather learning to live without them. Always trying to fill the void, the emptiness that's left inside your heart when they go.  
—*boardofwisdom.com*

I am convinced that it is not the fear of death, of our lives ending that haunts our sleep so much as the fear... that as far as the world is concerned, we might as well never have lived.  
—Harold Kushner

Man is perishable. That may be; but let us perish resisting, and if it is only nothingness that awaits us, let us act so that it will be an injustice.  
—Etienne de Senancour

There is no such thing as bad publicity except your own obituary.

—Brendan Behan

No man enjoys the true taste of life, but he who is ready and willing to quit it.

—Lucius Annaeus Seneca

It's possible to make a more profound contribution to society after you're dead than before. The ability to feel no pain is a kind of superpower that corpses, in the hands of science, can use to help make the world better. Also interesting, especially in military science, is the discomfort around their use in research. Even though they're dead—are bone and tissue and skin now—they still look like people. And we have a natural, if irrational, reluctance to 'harm' them.

—Mary Roach

Let no one weep for me, or celebrate my funeral with mourning; for I still live, as I pass to and fro through the mouths of men.

—Ennius

As the 100-year-old Bob Hope lay dying, his wife asked him where he preferred to be buried. His reply was 'Surprise me.'

—Robert Lichtman

It is difficult to accept death in this society because it is unfamiliar. In spite of the fact that it happens all the time, we never see it.

—Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

I would like to think that one life is enough, and that when I see it coming to an end I can meet the darkness with resignation and perhaps acceptance....I owe God a death, and the earth a pound or so of chemical. Now let's see if I can remember that when the time comes.

—Wallace Stegner

The supreme irony of life is that hardly anyone gets out of it alive.

—Robert A. Heinlein

Life is hard, after all, it does kill you.

—Katherine Hepburn

One sometimes says: 'He killed himself because he was bored with life.' One ought rather to say: 'He killed himself because he was bored by lack of life.'

—Victor Hugo

So that he seemed to depart not from life, but from one home to another.

—Cornelius Nepos

The fact that when we die we are nothing more than worm meat---I just don't think about it.

—Robin Green

I believe the hardest part of healing after you've lost someone you love, is to recover the 'you' that went away with them.

—Unknown

As I sit in heaven and watch you everyday,  
I try to let you know with signs I never went away.  
I hear you when you're laughing, and watch you as you sleep.  
I even place my arms around you to calm you as you weep.  
I see you wish the days away, begging to have me home.  
So I try to send you signs so you know you are not alone.  
Don't feel guilty that you have life that was denied to me.  
Heaven is truly beautiful, just you wait and see.  
So live your life, laugh again, enjoy yourself, be free.  
Then I know with every breath you take  
You'll be taking one for me.

—Unknown

The older I become, the more I think about dying, and the less I worry about dying.

—John Chesire

Most women say there is no greater pain than to bear a child. I say there is no greater pain than to bury one.

—Unknown

Just before I die, I am going to swallow a bag of popcorn kernels. My cremation is going to be epic!

—Internet Meme

## **THE BROKEN CHAIN**

We little knew that day,  
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 although we cannot see you,  
You are always at 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.

—Ron Tranmer

## **THE BEACH IN THE SKY**

I closed my eyes.  
Felt the warmth of the sun on my face.  
All the grief and pain  
Was simply too hard to erase.

I could smell the ocean in the air.  
I opened my eyes only to see you far off in the distance.  
I knew it was you there.

I called out your name  
As I ran to you.  
My prayers had been answered.  
It was all too good to be true.

Beautiful as always  
You smiled and held me so near.  
This moment was happening  
It was all perfectly clear.

You laughed and said  
'I'm happy you're here. Welcome to my beach in the sky,  
But you can't stay forever.'  
As a big sister always knows why.

'You see there is a little place at my beach in the sky.  
It's called Heaven and that's where I live.  
I am happy and content  
And have no one else to forgive.'

'I dance in the sun and play in the waves.  
I collect seashells as I watch the sunrise and set  
All of my days.'

'I know no more hate, sorrow or grief.  
I only know love and peace.  
And I stand firmly with my God on that belief.'

'You have not yet learned what it takes.  
You can't be with me on my beach in the sky.  
Just because you think you have faith  
You still have not learned why.'

'Go back to your world and do what you can.  
Be kind and gentle to each and every man.  
Have a compassionate heart.  
Remember my words as we now must part.'

'Little things matter.  
Be the best you can be.  
Take great care with others  
As you would a seashell at sea.  
Be helpful, be strong  
And never ask why.  
That's all it takes

To reach my beach in the sky.’

I opened my eyes  
And felt the mean Spring Winter cold.  
It was all an illusion  
Everything I had just been told.

The snow flurries fell.  
I was not on a beach  
But was back in my hell.  
It could have all been a dream  
Until I looked down  
And discovered a seashell.

—Jackie Bush Holcomb

### **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 in a thousand winds that blow,  
I am the softly falling snow.  
I am the gentle showers of rain,  
I am the fields of ripening grain.  
I am in the morning hush,  
I am in the graceful rush  
Of beautiful birds in circling flight,  
I am the star shine of the night.  
I am in the flowers that bloom,  
I am in a quiet room.  
I am in the birds that sing,  
I am in each lovely thing.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry,  
I am not there. I do not die.

—Mary Elizabeth Frye

## WILL YOU LEND ME A CHILD

'I'll lend you for a little time a child of mine, he said.'  
For you to love – while he lives,  
and mourn for when he's dead.  
It may be six or seven years,  
or twenty-two or three, but will you,  
till I call him back, take care of him for me?  
He'll bring his smiles to gladden you,  
and should this stay be brief.  
You'll have his lovely memories as solace for your grief.  
I cannot promise he will stay,  
since all from earth return.  
But there are lessons taught down there  
I want this child to learn.  
I've looked this world over  
in search for teachers true.  
And from the throngs that crowd life's lanes,  
I have selected you.  
Now will you give him all your love,  
nor count the labor vain,  
Nor hate me when I come  
to call to take him back again?'  
I fancied that I heard them say,  
'Dear Lord, Thy will be done.  
For all the joy Thy child shall bring,  
the risk of grief we'll run.  
We'll shelter him with tenderness;  
we'll love him while we may.  
And for the happiness we've known  
forever grateful stay.  
But should the angels call for him  
much sooner than we've planned.  
We'll brave the bitter grief that comes  
and try to understand.'

—Edgar Guest

## REMEMBERING

Go ahead and mention my loved one,  
The one that died, you know.  
Don't worry about hurting me further.  
The depth of my pain doesn't show.  
Don't worry about making me cry I'm already crying inside.  
Help me to heal by releasing The tears that I try to hide.  
I'm hurt when you just keep silent,  
Pretending they didn't exist,  
I'd rather you mention my loved one  
Knowing that they have been missed.  
You asked me how I was doing I say 'pretty good' or 'fine'  
But healing is something ongoing I feel it will take a lifetime.

—Elizabeth Den

The moment that you left me, my heart was split in two; one side was filled with memories; the other side died with you. I often lay awake at night when the world is fast asleep; and take a walk down memory lane with tears upon my cheek. Remembering you is easy, I do it everyday; but missing you is a heartache that never goes away. I hold you tightly within my heart and there you will remain; you see life has gone on without you, but will never be the same.

—Unknown

Only people who are capable of loving strongly can also suffer great sorrow, but this same necessity of loving serves to counteract their grief and heals them.

— Leo Tolstoy

There is an hour, a minute you will remember it forever when you know instinctively on the basis of the most inconsequential evidence, that something is wrong. You don't know can't know that it is the first of a series of 'wrongful' events that will culminate in the utter devastation of your life as you have known it.

—Joyce Carol Oates

The reality is that we don't forget, move on, and have closure, but rather we honor, we remember, and incorporate our deceased children and siblings into our lives in a new way. In fact, keeping memories of your loved one alive in your mind and heart is an important part of your healing journey.

—Harriet Schiff

We can endure much more than we think we can; all human experience testifies to that. All we need to do is learn not to be afraid of pain. Grit your teeth and let it hurt. Don't deny it, don't be overwhelmed by it. It will not last forever. One day, the pain will be gone and you will still be there.

—Harold Kushner

No one ever told me that grief felt so much like fear.

—C. S. Lewis

There is no grief like the grief that does not speak.

—Henry Wordsworth

A child can live with anything as long as he or she is told the truth and is allowed to share with loved ones the natural feelings people have when they are suffering.

—Eda LeShan

Grieving is a journey that teaches us how to love in a new way now that our loved one is no longer with us. Consciously remembering those who have died is the key that opens the hearts, that allows us to love them in new ways.

—Tom Attig

I believe that fear of life brings a greater fear of death.

—David Blaine

Sorrow makes us all children again, destroys all differences of intellect. The wisest know nothing.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Time is a physician that heals every grief.

—Diphilus

The deep pain that is felt at the death of every friendly soul arises from the feeling that there is in every individual something which is inexpressible, peculiar to him alone, and is, therefore, absolutely and irretrievably lost.

—Arthur Schopenhauer

The sorrow which has no vent in tears may make other organs weep.

—Henry Maudsley

Suicide is unspeakable, and to speak it is somehow to bring it into a human, imaginable sphere, even if only in the moment of speaking. The need to tell is both a need to tell oneself and a need to be heard.... Telling and being heard are the first steps toward reconnection.

—Victoria Alexander

We Remember Them...

In the rising of the sun and in its going down,  
We remember them;

We remember them;  
In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,

We remember them;  
In the opening of buds and in the warmth of summer,

We remember them;  
In the rustling of leaves and the beauty of autumn,

We remember them;  
In the beginning of the year and when it ends,

We remember them;  
When we are weary and in need of strength,

We remember them;  
When we are lost and sick at heart,

We remember them;  
When we have joys we yearn to share,

We remember them;  
So long as we live, they too shall live

For they are now a part of us as  
We remember them.

—from *Gates of Prayer*,  
Judaism  
Prayerbook

She was no longer wrestling with the grief, but could sit down with it as a lasting companion and make it a sharer in her thoughts.

—George Eliot

So it's true, when all is said and done, grief is the price we pay for love.

—E. A. Bucchianeri

The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not 'get over' the loss of a loved one; you will learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same nor would you want to.

—Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

You don't have to think very hard to realize that our dread of both relationships and loneliness ... has to do with angst about death, the recognition that I'm going to die, and die very much alone, and the rest of the world is going to go merrily on without me.

—David Foster Wallace

Each day, we wake slightly altered, and the person we were yesterday is dead. So why, one could say, be afraid of death, when death comes all the time?

— John Updike

Many peoples' tombstones should read 'Died at 30, buried at 60'

—Nicholas M. Butler

It is difficult to accept death in this society because it is unfamiliar. In spite of the fact that it happens all the time, we never see it.

—Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

What happens if you get scared half to death twice?

—Steven Wright

It seems to me that if you or I must choose between two courses of thought or action, we should remember our dying and try so to live that our death brings no pleasure on the world.

—John Steinbeck

Life is strewn with so many dangers, and can be the source of so many misfortunes, that death is not the greatest of them.

--Napoleon I

There is no greater sorrow than to recall a happy time in the midst of wretchedness.  
—Dante Alighieri

I just don't want to die alone, that's all. That's not too much to ask for, is it?  
—Richard Pryor

Take death for example. A great deal of our effort goes into avoiding it. We make extraordinary efforts to delay it, and often consider its intrusion a tragic event. Yet we'd find it hard to live without it. Death gives meaning to our lives. It gives importance and value to time. Time would become meaningless if there were too much of it.

—Ray Kurzweil

The tyrant dies and his rule is over, the martyr dies and his rule begins.  
—Soren Kierkegaard

Funeral pomp is more for the vanity of the living than for the honor of the dead.  
—Francois de La  
Rochefoucauld

Reading the epitaphs, our only salvation lies in resurrecting the dead and burying the living.

—Paul Eldridge

There is no cure for birth and death save to enjoy the interval. The dark background which death supplies brings out the tender colors of life in all their purity.  
—George Santayana

To die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier.  
—Walt Whitman

Praising what is lost makes remembrance dear.  
—William Shakespeare

What is lovely never dies, but passes into other loveliness, star-dust or seafoam, flower or winged air.  
—Thomas Bailey Aldrich

No young man believes he shall ever die.  
--William Hazlitt

The difference between sex and death is that with death you can do it alone and no one is going to make fun of you.

—Woody Allen

Death comes to all  
But great achievements build a monument  
Which shall endure until the sun grows cold.

--Georg Fabricius

While we are young the idea of death or failure is intolerable to us; even the possibility of ridicule we cannot bear.

--Isak Dinesen

Death is as sure for that which is born, as birth is for that which is dead. Therefore grieve not for what is inevitable.

—Bhagavad Gita

I am getting a little tired of pretending I'm excited every time it's somebody's birthday. I mean really, at this point, what is the big deal? How many times do we have to celebrate that someone was born? Every year, every person, over and over? All you did was not die for twelve months. This is the big accomplishment?

—Jerry Seinfeld

One who does not know when to die, does not know how to live.

—John Ruskin

The past grows gradually around one, like a placenta for dying.

—John Berger

As soon as the dirt is hitting the casket, it'll all be forgotten.

—Eric Bogosian

Death's an old joke, but each individual encounters it anew.

—Ivan Turgenev

He who pretends to look on death without fear lies. All men are afraid of dying, this is the great law of sentient beings, without which the entire human species would soon be destroyed.

—Jean-Jacques  
Rousseau

Socrates dies with honor, surrounded by his disciples listening to the most tender words—the easiest death that one could wish to die. Jesus dies in pain, dishonor, mockery, the object of universal cursing—the most horrible death that one could fear. At the receipt of the cup of poison, Socrates blesses him who could not give it to him without tears; Jesus, while suffering the sharpest pains, prays for His most bitter enemies. If Socrates lived and died like a philosopher, Jesus lived and died like a god.

—Jean-Jacques  
Rousseau

It is not because other people are dead that our affection for them grows faint, it is because we ourselves are dying.

—Marcel Proust

At the moment of death I hope to be surprised.

—Ivan Illich

Glory comes too late, after one has been reduced to ashes.

—Marcus Valerius  
Martial

Death is very likely the single best invention of life. It's life's change agent; it clears out the old to make way for the new.

—Steve Jobs

A man without ambition is dead. A man with ambition but no love is dead. A man with ambition and love for his blessings here on earth is ever so alive. Having been alive, it won't be hard in the end to lie down and rest.

—Pearl Bailey

A lot of people die at 40, but they aren't buried until 30 years later.

—George S. Patton

I pressed my father's hand and told him I would protect his grave with my life. My father smiled and passed away to the spirit land.

—Chief Joseph

Those who think there is a limit when grieving...have never lost a piece of their heart.

—Internet Meme

When Mabelle Webb died, Clifton began the mourning that lasted until his own death. Noel Coward noted in a letter,...‘Poor Clifton...is still, after two months, wailing and sobbing over Mabelle’s death. As she was well over ninety, gaga, and driving him mad for years, this seems excessive and over indulgent...‘The most famous remark to go the rounds of Clifton Webb’s friends was Noel Coward’s final, acerbic one to him: ‘It must be tough to be orphaned at seventy-one!’

—Liz Smith

Grandparents can be role models about areas that may not be significant to young children directly but that can teach them about patience and courage when we are ill or handicapped by problems of aging. Our attitudes toward retirement, marriage, recreation, even our feelings about death and dying may make much more of an impression than we realize.

—Eda Le Shan

I had not known my father very well. We had got on badly, partly because we shared, in our different fashions, the vice of stubborn pride. When he was dead I realized that I had hardly ever spoken to him. When he had been dead a long time I began to wish I had. It seems to be typical of life in America, where opportunities, real and fancied, are thicker than anywhere else on the globe, that the second generation has no time to talk to the first.

--James Baldwin

Some time before his death, he had stamped his likeness upon a little boy.

--Charles Dickens

When you are dead your sister’s tears will dry as time goes on, your widow’s tears will cease in another’s arms, but your mother will mourn you till the day she dies.

--Arab Proverb

He only half dies who leaves an image of himself in his sons.

--Carlo Goldoni

The power we exert over the future behavior of our children is enormous. Even after they have left home, even after we have left the world, there will always be part of us that will remain with them forever.

--Neil Kurshan

Deeds, not stones, are the true monuments of the great.

—J. L. Motley

Good parents, happy marriages, good children, fine funerals.

--Chinese Proverb

When you die, if you've got five real friends, then you've had a great life.

—Lee Iacocca

A useless life is only an early death.

--Johann Wolfgang  
von Goethe

He who lives only to benefit himself confers on the world a benefit when he dies.

—Tertullian

We all die. The goal isn't to live forever, the goal is to create something that will.

—Chuck Palahniuk

I'm the girl nobody knows until she commits suicide. Then suddenly everyone had a class with her.

—Tom Leveen

Someone who is about to die does not mourn the dead.

—Friedrich Durrenmatt

There's never been a doctor who served many patients who, despite their best efforts, did not lose some of them to death. But they understood that was part of life itself.

—Zig Ziglar

Tears may be dried up, but the heart—never.

—Marguerite Gardiner

Absence and death are the same—only that in death there is no suffering.

—Theodore Roosevelt

It is when we are faced with death that we turn most bookish.

—Jules Renard

Book: A place where the dead will never die.

—Dan L. Miller

When I die, I want to decompose in a barrel of porter and have it served in all the pubs in Dublin.

—J. P. Donleavy

I had my own notion of grief.  
I thought it was the sad time  
That followed the death of someone you love.  
And you had to push through it  
To get to the other side.  
But I'm learning there is no other side.  
There is no pushing through.  
But rather,  
There is absorption.  
Adjustment.  
Acceptance.  
And grief is not something you complete,  
But rather, you endure.  
Grief is not a task to finish  
And move on,  
But an element of yourself-  
An alteration of your being.  
A new way of seeing.  
A new definition of self.

—Gwen Flowers

Given the guilt and shame involved, gambling addiction frequently progresses to a profound despair. The *National Council on Problem Gambling* estimates that one in five gambling addicts attempts suicide—the highest rate among addicts of any kind. There are no accurate figures for suicides related to gambling problems, but there are ample anecdotes: the police officer who shot himself in the head at a Detroit casino; the accountant who jumped to his death from a London skyscraper in despair over his online-gambling addiction; the 24-year-old student who killed himself in Las Vegas after losing his financial-aid money to gambling.

—John Rosengren

To live forever should not be an obligation. In fact, eternal life should only be for those who wish for it, because if we are depressed and unhappy with our lives, just the idea of living forever is an unbearable source of suffering.

—Claude Vorilhon

Death is what gets poets up in the morning. If all the poems about death and mortality were removed from the *Norton Anthology of Poetry*, it would be the *Norton Pamphlet of Poetry*.

--Billy Collins

The darkness of death is like the evening twilight; it makes all objects appear more lovely to the dying.

—Jean Paul

4-year-old: What happens when you die?

Me: You go to heaven.

4-year-old: No, I mean when you die, do I get your stuff?

—James Breakwell

As the Christmas season kicks into high gear and we're surrounded by gorgeously decorated fir trees and songs of yuletide gay, it's easy to forget that the holidays represent a grim time in terms of health statistics. You're more likely to die of natural causes from Dec. 25 through New Year's Day than at any other time of the year....

It holds true for all ages except for children and for numerous conditions including heart disease, respiratory problems and cancer....The possibility of reduced staffing at medical facilities or even that patients hold back on seeking medical care during the season being factors causing the jump in deaths....it could be that terminally ill patients may be hanging on to spend the holiday with their loved ones.

—Ariana Eunjung Cha

How young can you die of old age?

—Steven Wright

I intend to live forever. So far, so good.

—Steven Wright

I regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail. There is no heaven or afterlife for broken down computers; that is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark.

—Stephen Hawking

One wants to live, of course, indeed one only stays alive by virtue of the fear of death, but I think, as I thought then, that it is better to die violently and not too old.

—George Orwell

From personal experience, I know for sure that the number one thing that saddens the dead more than our grief — is not being conscious of their existence around us. They do want you to talk to them as if they were still in a physical body. They do want you to play their favorite music, keep their pictures out, and continue living as if they never went away. However, time and ‘corruption’ have blurred the lines between the living and the dead, between man and Nature, and between the physical and the etheric. There was a time when man could communicate with animals, plants, the ether, and the dead. To do so requires one to access higher levels of consciousness, and this knowledge has been hidden from us. Why? Because then the plants would tell us how to cure ourselves. The animals would show us their feelings, and the dead would tell us that good acts do matter. In all, we would come to know that we are all one. And most importantly, we would be alerted of threats and opportunities, good and evil, truth vs. fiction. We would have eyes working for humanity from every angle, and this threatens ‘the corrupt’. Secret societies exist to hide these truths, and to make sure lies are preserved from generation to generation.

—Suzy Kassem

Memorial Service: Farewell party for someone who already left.

—Robert Byrne

The nearer people approach old age the closer they return to a semblance of childhood, until the time comes for them to depart this life, again like children, neither tired of living nor aware of death.

—Desiderius Erasmus

Those who assert that capital punishment is wrong because the state should not itself take on the guilt of murder completely miss the point. For by failing to take the life of those who murder their fellow men, the state becomes a passive accessory after the fact.

--Nettie Leef

Sixty-two percent of gun fatalities every day (53 out of 85) are suicides. Our large surplus of guns makes us not more likely to commit crimes, or even to prevent them; it makes us most likely to kill ourselves.

--Adam Miller

’Tis better to live rich than to die rich.

--Samuel Johnson

If you die you're completely happy and your soul somewhere lives on. I'm not afraid of dying. Total peace after death, becoming someone else is the best hope I've got.

—Kurt Cobain

The only difference between death and taxes is that death doesn't get worse every time Congress meets.

--Will Rogers

There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy.

--Albert Camus

Death is the true inspiring genius, or the muse of philosophy....Indeed, without death men could scarcely philosophize.

—Arthur Schopenhauer

The world didn't stop because we weren't in it anymore.

—Susanna Kaysen

What kills a person at twenty-five? Leukemia. An accident. But George knows the better odds are that someone who passes at that age dies of unhappiness. Drug overdose. Suicide. Reckless behavior.

—Scott Turow

As for food, half of my friends have dug their graves with their teeth.

--Chauncey M. Depew

One reason, maybe, why Americans die so young—in middle age—especially in cities, is because they do not know their own bodies. They force themselves to live and do things without any psychic acquaintance with their bodies. Their instinct is deaf to the language of the body, which would tell them how to live if they would listen to it—they are absolute strangers to their own bodies, shy and self-conscious about them.

--Katharine Butler  
Hathaway

It is true that I am carrying out various methods of treatment recommended by doctors and dentists in the hope of dying in the remote future in perfect health.

--George Santayana

More die in the United States of too much food than of too little.

--John Kenneth  
Galbraith

Use your health, even to the point of wearing it out. That is what it is for. Spend all you have before you die; and do not outlive yourself.

--George Bernard Shaw

The trouble with heart disease is that the first symptom is often hard to deal with: sudden death.

--Michael Phelps

I take my only exercise acting as pallbearer at the funerals of my friends who exercise regularly.

--Mark Twain

An unhealthy life is destined to end with an unhealthy death.

—Nancy S. Mure

A great tragedy is occurring. Millions of people are dying prematurely. These people are killing themselves and they don't even know it.

—Tim Loy

People with diseases like AIDS and cancer feel an urgency in straightening out their lives, examining their purpose, and confronting the reality of death. Ironically, in spite of the physical and emotional pain they experience, many of these patients express gratitude for this opportunity. The encounter with their own mortality changes their priorities in life, their values and aspirations. For many, it makes them truly cherish life and the ability to give and receive love.

—Jeff Seibert

If you don't take care of yourself, the undertaker will overtake that responsibility for you.

—Terri Guillemets

People who don't know how to keep themselves healthy ought to have the decency to get themselves buried, and not waste time about it.

—Henrik Ibsen

Childhood is the kingdom where nobody dies.

—Edna St. Vincent  
Millay

‘You can’t imagine how it is when everyone you know is gone,’ someone I knew who was old would say to me, and I would nod, uncomprehending, yes I can, I can imagine; would even think, God forgive me, that there must be a certain peace in outliving all debts and claims, in being known to no one, floating free. I believed that days would be too full forever, too crowded with friends there was no time to see. I believed, by way of contemplating the future, that we would all be around for one another’s funerals. I was wrong. I had failed to imagine, I had not understood.

—Joan Didion

It is hard to have patience with people who say ‘There is no death’ or ‘Death doesn’t matter.’ There is death. And whatever matters. And whatever happens has consequences, and it and they are irrevocable and irreversible. You might as well say that birth doesn’t matter.

—C. S. Lewis

The truth is the kindest thing we can give folks in the end.

—Harriet Beecher Stowe

If, as I can’t help suspecting, the dead also feel the pains of separation (and this may be one of their purgatorial sufferings), then for both lovers, and for all pairs of lovers without exception, bereavement is a universal and integral part of our experience of love.

—C. S. Lewis

Suicide may be a choice, but not as much as it is expected when everything else fails.

—Mark Brightlife

Hate is a prolonged form of suicide.

--Douglas V. Steere

The beauty of death is that it is a constant reminder of the limited time we spend here in this unique life on Earth. It is the ongoing wakeup call that reminds us to be joyous, to laugh, to love, to be compassionate and grateful, and most of all—to forgive.

—Alaric Hutchinson

As men are not able to fight against death, misery, ignorance, they have taken it into their heads, in order to be happy, not to think of them at all.

—Blaise Pascal

Virtually every civilized society today holds sacred the right to peaceably bury their dead.

—Mike Schmidt

Once one is convinced of the idea of eternal life or death, the person may do almost anything to achieve the reward or avoid punishment. He may fly an airplane into a building or become a missionary to another county. She may become a celibate nun or vow to raise a quiver full of children and homeschool them according to her religion. At the very least, the person will attend church regularly, give money, pray and do other things to ensure good standing with the deity. The root of this action is the hope for a reward and avoidance of punishment.

—Darrel Ray

There is this to be said in favor of drinking, that it takes the drunkard first out of society, then out of the world.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

The mortality rate of cigarette smokers and non-smokers is 100 percent. The only difference is the timing.

--Unknown

One reason why the courts don't handle more drunken driver cases is that the undertaker gets them first.

—Unknown

Jellinek's disease (alcoholism) is responsible for:

50 percent of all auto fatalities

80 percent of all home violence

30 percent of all suicides

60 percent of all child abuse

65 percent of all drownings

It is estimated that when a woman contracts the disease, her husband leaves her in nine out of ten cases; when a man contracts it, his wife leaves in one out of ten cases.

--Kathleen Whalen  
Fitzgerald

An alcoholic spends his life committing suicide on the installment plan.

--Laurence J. Peter

Tobacco use directly causes more than 300,000 deaths in America each year, killing 13 times as many people as hard drugs do.

--Dr. Kevin R. Cooper

The number of people who die every day from cigarette smoking is the same as if two jumbo jets crashed each day and not a single person walked away alive.

--C. Everett Koop, M.D.  
Former United  
States Surgeon  
General

Let's not be too critical of the tobacco industry. After all, it has found a cure for old age.

--Lloyd Clark

We have allowed death to change its name from Southern rope to Northern dope. Too many black youths have been victimized by pushing dope into their veins instead of hope into their brains.

--Jesse Jackson

Much smoking kills live men and cures dead swine.

--George D. Prentice

## **I WENT TO A PARTY**

I went to a party, Mom.

And remembered what you said.  
You told me not to drink, Mom,  
so I had a Sprite instead.

I felt proud of myself, The way you said I would,  
That I didn't drink and drive,  
Though some friends said I should.

I made a healthy choice,  
And your advice to me was right  
As the party finally ended,

And the kids drove out of sight.

I got into my car,  
Sure to get home in one piece,  
I never knew what was coming,  
Mom something I expected least.

Now I'm lying on the pavement,  
And I hear the policeman say,  
'The kid that caused this wreck was drunk,'  
Mom, His voice seems far away.

My own blood's all around me,  
As I try hard not to cry.

I can hear the paramedic say,  
'This girl is going to die.'  
I'm sure the guy had no idea,  
While he was flying high,  
Because he chose to drink and drive,  
Now I would have to die.

So why do people do it, Mom,  
Knowing that it ruins lives?  
And now the pain is cutting me,  
Like a hundred stabbing knives.

Tell sister not to be afraid, Mom,  
Tell Daddy to be brave,  
And when I go to heaven,  
Put 'Daddy's Girl' on my grave.

Someone should have taught him,  
That it's wrong to drink and drive  
Maybe if his parents had,  
I'd still be alive.

My breath is getting shorter, Mom,  
I'm getting really scared.  
These are my final moments,

And I'm so unprepared.

I wish that you could hold me, Mom,  
As I lie here and die.  
I wish that I could say I love you,  
Mom.

So I love you and good-bye.

--Unknown (Printed by  
the *Illinois Liquor*  
*Control*  
*Commission*)

But suicide, quick or slow, a sudden spill or a gradual oozing away through the years, is the price John Barleycorn exacts. No friend of his ever escapes making the just, due payment.

--Jack London

### **A CIGARETTE SPEAKS TO A PRETTY GIRL**

I'm just a friendly cigarette  
Don't be afraid of me:  
Why all the advertisers say  
I'm Harmless as can be.  
They tell you I'm your 'Best Friend' (I like that cunning lie)  
And you say you'll walk a mile for me.  
Because I'll satisfy.  
So come on girly, be a sport.  
Why longer hesitate?  
With me between your pretty lips  
You'll be quite up to date.  
You may not like me right at first  
But very soon I'll bet--  
You'll find you just can't get along,  
Without a cigarette.  
You've smoked one package  
So, I know I've nothing to fear.  
When once I get a grip on girls,  
They're mine for life my dear!  
Your freedom you begin to lose.  
The very day I meet,

When I convinced you it was harmless  
To smoke a cigarette.

The colors fading from your cheeks.  
Your fingertips are stained,  
And now you'd like to give me up,  
But sister, 'You're chained.'  
You even took a drink last night,  
I thought you would ere long,  
For those whom I enslave, soon lose  
Their sense of right and wrong.  
You're pale and thin and have a cough  
The doctor says T.B.  
He says you can't expect to live  
Much longer, thanks to me.  
But, it's too late to worry now;  
When you become my slave,  
You should have known the chances  
Were you'd fill an early grave.  
And now that I have done my part  
And I have done it well,  
I'll leave you with my partner,  
DEATH,  
He'll come for you farewell...

--Written by a 14-Year-  
Old Girl in *Better  
Homes and  
Gardens*

Smoking cures weight problems. Eventually.

—Steven Wright

It never occurred to me to stop using drugs. The classic agony of addiction. You can't stop and you can't go on. The pain of living without drugs was as bad as the pain of living with drugs. When you use drugs in such a willful way, you're transgressing some elemental code. You're destroying yourself, and body and soul recoils at it....Unfortunately...there is only one conclusion, and that is death (by misadventure).

--Marianne Faithfull

It is common knowledge that smoking is considered one of the nation's leading causes of preventable death, but it's less widely known that cigarettes are also the leading cause of fatal fires.

--Ed Markey

The public health authorities never mention the main reason many Americans have for smoking heavily, which is that smoking is a fairly sure, fairly honorable form of suicide.

—Kurt Vonnegut

- Cigarettes kill 390,000 Americans every year, a death toll equivalent to that which would result from three 747s crashing every day of the year.
- Smoking is the principal cause of preventable death in this country. The effects of passive exposure to smoke are estimated to account for nearly 50,000 additional deaths a year.
- Each day more than 3,000 children and adolescents start smoking. They consume nearly a billion packs of cigarettes a year.
- 1.7 million boys ages 12 to 17 had used chewing tobacco within the previous year.

—*Journal of American  
Medical  
Association*

Alcoholism or addiction is a disease because it fits the definition of disease. It is progressive and chronic, and left untreated, it will kill.

—Irene Tomkinson

A fraternity-related hazing death has occurred nearly every year since 2000. Hospital transports for alcohol overdose are a common occurrence Thursday through Saturday nights on college campuses across the country. One in five women will be sexually assaulted while in college....More than half of college students involved in clubs, teams, and organizations experience hazing, and nearly half experienced it prior to coming to college.

--Scott Smith

The problem with drinking and driving is ... The MOURNING after!  
—Slogan

You can hand over your keys or your life. Make the right choice.  
—Slogan

For me, the good death includes being prepared to die, with my affairs in order, the good and bad messages delivered that need delivering. The good death means dying while I still have my mind sharp and aware; it also means dying without having to endure large amounts of suffering and pain. The good death means accepting death as inevitable, and not fighting it when the time comes. This is my good death, but as legendary psychotherapist Carl Jung said, 'It won't help to hear what I think about death.' Your relationship to mortality is your own.

—Caitlin Doughty

Unfortunately, there is no expiration date on grief.

—Elizabeth Czukas

The executive who works from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. every day will be both very successful and fondly remembered by his widow's next husband.

--John M. Capozzi

Uncertainty. Vulnerability. Death. Hard truths have a secret power over us. We'd rather ignore them.

—Eran Dror

There are people who fantasize about suicide, and paradoxically, these fantasies can be soothing because they usually involve either fantasizing about others' reactions to one's suicide or imagining how death would be a relief from life's travails. In both cases, an aspect of the fantasy is to exert control, either over others' views or toward life's difficulties. The writer A. Alvarez stated, 'There people ... for whom the mere idea of suicide is enough; they can continue to function efficiently and even happily provided they know they have their own, specially chosen means of escape always ready...' In her riveting 2008 memoir of bipolar disorder, *Manic*, Terri Cheney opened the book by stating, 'People... don't understand that when you're seriously depressed, suicidal ideation can be the only thing that keeps you alive. Just knowing there's an out--even if it's bloody, even if it's permanent--makes the pain bearable for one more day.'

This strategy appears to be effective for some people, but only for a while. Over longer periods, fantasizing about death leaves people more depressed and thus at higher risk for suicide, as Eddie Selby, Mike Amestis, and I recently showed in a study on violent daydreaming. A strategy geared toward increased feelings of self-control (fantasizing about the effects of one's suicide) 'works' momentarily, but ultimately backfires by undermining feelings of genuine self-control in the long run.

—Thomas Joiner

The manner of Demoivre's death has a certain interest for psychologists. Shortly before it, he declared that it was necessary for him to sleep some ten minutes or a quarter of an hour longer each day than the preceding one: the day after he had thus reached a total of something over twenty-three hours he slept up to the limit of twenty-four hours, and then died in his sleep.

—W. W. Rouse Ball

Dr. Webb says that losing a sibling is oftentimes much harder for a person than losing any other member of the family. 'A sibling represents a person's past, present, and future,' he says. 'Spouses have each other, and even when one eventually dies, they have memories of a time when they existed before that other person and can more readily imagine a life without them. Likewise, parents may have other children to be concerned with--a future to protect for them. To lose a sibling is to lose the one person with whom one shares a lifelong bond that is meant to continue on into the future.'

—John Corey Whaley

I postpone death by living, by suffering, by error, by risking, by giving, by losing.

—Anais Nin

Maniacal suicide. —This is due to hallucinations or delirious conceptions. The patient kills himself to escape from an imaginary danger or disgrace, or to obey a mysterious order from on high.

—Émile Durkheim

If Fate should say, 'Thy course is run,'  
It would not make me sad;  
All that I wished to do is done,  
All that I would have, had.

--Laurence Hope

Death is better, a milder fate than tyranny.

—Aeschylus

Studies have found that, compared with the intelligent, less intelligent people are more likely to suffer from some types of mental illness, become obese, develop heart disease, experience permanent brain damage from a traumatic injury, and end up in prison, where they are more likely than other inmates to be drawn to violence. They're also likely to die sooner.

—David H. Freedman

A tendency to self-destruction seems to be inherent in the overdeveloped human brain.

--A. T. W. Simeons

The pain of severe depression is quite unimaginable to those who have not suffered it, and it kills in many instances because its anguish can no longer be borne. The prevention of many suicides will continue to be hindered until there is a general awareness of the nature of this pain.

—William Styron

Man. Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present; the result being that he does not live in the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die, and then dies having never really lived.

—Dalai Lama XIV

Death anxiety is the mother of all religions, which, in one way or another, attempt to temper the anguish of our finitude.

—Irvin D. Yalom

As conscious beings, we are capable of understanding that we will die some day. We also have the ability to imagine a world after we die. Religion hijacks this ability and injects fear of eternal torture and abandonment as well as the promise of eternal bliss. A perfect carrot and stick approach. The ability to imagine what is beyond the horizon of death is what allows religion to take control and make us do unnatural things.

—Darrel Ray

The pain I feel from the razor blade doesn't even come close to what I'm feeling inside so it's useless because the equation is messed up: because razor blade pain should be equal to or greater than the heartache, that's just CUTTING 101. And if it's not—well you're fucked, my friend. It was nice knowing you, but you know what time it is?

It's time to let the darkness in.

Quid pro quo and all that.

It's time to find something more agonizing than the touch of the blade.

—Kady Hunt

Loss has no friend, no allies, no benefit to the human spirit.

—Asa Don Brown

People have their own deaths as well as their own lives, and even if there is nothing beyond death, we shall differ in our nothingness.

—E. M. Forster

As an individual, you are entitled to your time of grief, process of grief, and right to grieve.

—Asa Don Brown

When those you love die, the best you can do is honor their spirit for as long as you live. You make a commitment that you're going to take whatever lesson that person or animal was trying to teach you, and you make it true in your own life... it's a positive way to keep their spirit alive in the world, by keeping it alive in yourself.

—Patrick Swayze

There is no greater grief, than when a parent loses a child.

—Asa Don Brown

Life is short and Death is continually advancing apace; what need is there then, of providing so much for so short a Journey? Why will you load your self with so many Riches, when the less you have the more free you will be, and the better able to Walk? and when you shall come to your Journies end, you will find no worse Entertainment for being Poor, than those that shall come hither Richer fraught. But you will be less troubled for what you leave, and will have the less to answer for.

—Reverend Father Lewis  
of Granada (1702)

When you die, if you get a choice between going to regular heaven or pie heaven, choose pie heaven. It might be a trick, but if it's not, mmmmm boy!

—Jack Handey

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd  
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,  
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still

—Lord Byron

Edible, adj.: Good to eat, and wholesome to digest, as a worm to a toad, a toad to a snake, a snake to a pig, a pig to a man, and a man to a worm.

—Ambrose Bierce

Can I see another's woe,  
And not be in sorrow too?  
Can I see another's grief,  
And not seek for kind relief?

—William Blake

In the strict scientific sense we all feed on death—even vegetarians.

—Mr. Spock, *Star Trek*

One out of one dies. Nothing, no one, lives forever. In an age of medical miracles, we have not yet eliminated death. Through technology we have introduced new and different choices concerning the when, where, and how of death, but still not the whether. All things end at some point. Regardless of how much energy or emotional commitment we invest in a relationship, it cannot last forever. Because one cares, because one invests a certain portion of one's self into the cycles of others, one learns what it is to hurt and to grieve when those cycles are completed in one way or another.

If we have, then we are in danger of not having, and that loss (whether through death, divorce, abandonment or mutual dissolution) can be the most painful and devastating experience of one's own cycle. Or it can be a point of growth and expansion of the spirit. But, regardless, loss hurts.

Grief is a natural and normal reaction to loss, loss of any kind. It is a physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological response. The death of a child is perhaps the most devastating loss one may experience. Yet, grief occurs following any change in our lives. Even positive change can bring a momentary grief response.

Grief is a complex process, guided by our past experiences, our religious beliefs, our socio-economic situation, our physical health, and the cause of the loss. Love, anger, fear, frustration, loneliness, and guilt are all part of grief. It is important to understand that grief is not a sign of weakness or lack of faith. Grief is the price we pay for love.

In his research, Colin Murray Parkes identified four components of the grief process.

When we first become aware of the loss, we become numb. Shock is a physiological phenomenon which protects us from further pain. When our circuits become overloaded, we cannot accept further information. We stop listening, stop hearing; you may feel like you've stopped breathing. A protective fog blankets us and cushions the reality of death. We switch to 'automatic' and our responses become mechanical. Decisions are made and actions taken and events pass, all without our full participation. Shock is what helps us get through the necessary details of death. It can last anywhere from a few moments to several months. When the shock or numbness wears off, the reality of our loss crashes into us. The collision with reality of death hurts. Parkes calls this part of the grief process pining. We know it as hurt.

Unlike the localized pain of a physical injury, this pain is totally engulfing. Every part of us hurts. There's a tightness in the throat, a searing pain in the chest, a heaviness in the heart. It hurts to move. It hurts to breathe. It hurts just to be! Sometimes the pain is so intense, we may develop physical symptoms. Sleep irregularities, changes in appetite, and gastrointestinal disturbances are common. Heartache, restlessness, muscle tension, and sighing may occur.

Anger and guilt are common emotions. You may feel angry with God, your spouse, your child or with others either involved with or totally separate from the death of your child. You may be angry with yourself. Our sense of helplessness intensifies our anger. Why couldn't I prevent my child's death? 'If only's' begin to haunt our thoughts. We retrace, over and over again, the circumstances of our child's death, looking for something we should or could have done to prevent our child's death. *Why* cries out and goes unanswered.

Guilt feelings often accompany or follow anger. You may want to withdraw and be left alone.

Depression and feelings of emptiness and hollowness may temporarily overcome you. You may experience headaches, tightness in the throat or chest, muscle aches or a burning sensation in your stomach. Grief hurts! You may, for awhile, become preoccupied with images of your child. You may 'see' or sense your child's presence. You may begin to wonder if you are going crazy. Parkes calls the next part of the grief process dejection or depression. Now pain is replaced by emptiness. It may seem like you've fallen into a deep void. Emptiness may swallow up even the memories of your child. Apathy and deep depression are common. A feeling of being hollow sets in. We may feel that our lives have lost all meaning. Who are we now that our child is dead? Am I still a mother if there is no child to kiss? Am I still a dad if there is no one to tuck in at night? How can we go on living when our child has died? We feel cheated, betrayed, robbed not only of our child's presence, but of our future as well!

—Darcie Sims

## **REMNANTS**

Glimpses of you everywhere  
Often catch me unaware.  
Tell-tale remnants of the past,  
Care-free days that couldn't last,  
Echoes of a joyous laugh,  
Comic-books, a photograph.

Calliopes and carousels,  
Haunting songs weave mystic spells.  
Relics from the past will wane,  
But in my heart  
You'll still remain.

—Lily De Lauder

### **COME ON, DAD!**

The sun's shining, not a cloud to be  
seen,  
A day made in heaven, isn't it keen?  
Wow, can you believe such a  
glorious sight,  
A dream come true, a fantasy  
delight!

Dad! Hey, Dad! Something's not  
right.  
Mom's upstairs crying. Did you have  
a fight?  
No one is laughing or having any  
fun.  
Dad, what's wrong? Is it something  
I've done?

Come on, Dad, this is your day.  
Get up, get going; come on and play.  
Why are you sitting and staring at  
space?  
Have you forgotten? Is this our same  
place?

I'm here, Dad! Can't you see I'm  
right here?  
I'm here in your heart; isn't that  
clear?  
I'm here in your thoughts and all  
that you do.

I've never been gone from any of  
you.

Our love lives forever. It won't go  
away.

That's why we'll always share this  
day.

Put on a smile, not an ugly ole  
frown. Come on, Dad . . . Don't let me  
down!

Enjoy your day. Share it with me.  
Laugh and love our whole family.  
I'm here, Dad, like I'll always be,  
Come on, Dad. Do it! Do it for me!

—Carol Cichella

#### **A MESSAGE TO MY WIFE**

The years of our marriage are few  
When measured against a lifetime.  
We have encountered joy  
And shared confidence in our future.  
We have known hope's ending  
And have borne the death of dreams.  
We have, together, been diminished.  
Even minor aspirations have eluded  
Our grasp in the cruel shadow  
Of the loss of our child.  
Yet, we still share our lives,  
And though the brightness we  
Once knew has fled,  
We have grown enough to sense  
A return of laughter — an uplifting  
To shatter the dimness, to remind us  
That tomorrow will come and  
Dreams may again be born.

—Don Hackett

Sunlight dancing in the branches  
Of the birch tree at my door.  
Meadow stretching smug and lazy,  
Darker, greener, than before.

Wind as warm as hugging  
children,  
Clouds so round and very close,  
And one small grave there  
trembles  
Lovingly, an early rose.

—Sascha Wagner

### **SOME WAYS TO HELP A GRIEVING SPOUSE**

1. Assign top priority to your marriage relationship.
2. Cultivate transparency, openness, and honesty.
3. Accept the pain that you feel. Be willing to share it and to listen to your spouse's expression of the pain he or she is feeling.
4. Be patient with your spouse and with yourself. Recognize that your spouse is probably not at the same place in the grief process as you, and that is okay.
5. Don't expect your spouse to be your only source of healing.
6. Keep working at communicating. Give special attention to your affection for each other. Learn and practice gestures of love. Remember to stay in touch physically; the importance of human touching and hugging is hard to overestimate.
7. Allow or create space in your relationship. Everyone is entitled to a degree of privacy with his feelings, including his grief.
8. Allow yourselves to enjoy life and each other. Be willing to laugh together, as well as to cry together. Work at finding some fun things to do together.
9. Help each other to remember that life is more than this child who has died. As important as this child is to you, and as much as you feel pain over his or her death, your marriage relationship involves far more than this child.

—Howard Cupp

## TO MY HUSBAND

My love, these past few months  
Seem to have paralyzed us  
In pain and anguish,  
And I know, in that state,  
The flow of communication becomes  
stilted.

The love we have and share  
Is forever, darling.  
But I realize that you have felt,  
As have I, a separateness in our  
grief.

It's alright, you know, dear.  
I guess it is the nature of a loss so  
devastating  
That, no matter how we try to  
comfort one another  
Along the strange path of grieving,  
We sometimes feel so alone.

We have done marvelously, my love.  
We talked, cried, and remembered  
our son  
With tears and smiles.  
I know we will laugh again,  
My dearest beloved.  
We will laugh again—I promise.

—Molly Murphy

## NOW I KNOW

I never knew, when you lost your  
child,  
What you were going through.  
I wasn't there, I stayed away,  
I just deserted you.

I didn't know the words to say,  
I didn't know the things to do.  
I think your pain so frightened me,  
I didn't know how to comfort you.

And then one day my child died.  
You were the first one there.  
You quietly stayed by my side, listened,  
And held me as I cried.

You didn't leave, you didn't go.  
The lesson learned is . . . NOW I KNOW.

—Alice Kerr

## **TAKE YOUR TIME**

The one phrase we hear more than any other is 'It will take time for you to get over your child's death.' We know that this is spoken with care and love. But little do we know at the beginning of our grief just what time means: the first time, the day time, the night time, the last time, all of these times. The one thing we can say is 'take it.' Take all the time you need. Grief is hard work, and we need to take the time for all of the aspects we talk so much about and really work through it.

Take the time to feel; it is hard but worth it. We can't just push those feelings aside because they are part of who we are, how we have managed, and the life we have had. All of our life experiences combine to affect our feelings.

Take the time to talk, Talk to anyone who seems to care about you. Ask your friends and family if they will take the time to listen....Take the time to read. When you read the experiences of others, you will realize that you are not alone. Maybe a special book will help you understand what is happening to you during this time we call bereavement; take the time to read and re-read the paragraphs or chapters that help.

Take the time to take care of yourself physically. If you like to walk, jog or run, go out and use that time to help you feel better. Get enough rest, take the time to sleep late some days, or go to bed earlier if you need to. Sleeping may be an escape, but if it helps you, take the time for an extra few hours. Take care of yourself by eating better. Try to understand that food gives you some energy and that food helps to satisfy unmet needs. Food is always better for you than drugs or alcohol, and a small weight gain or loss is not unusual. Take the time to understand what is happening to your body.

Take the time to be angry or guilty without letting these feelings ruin your life. You may think that your life is ruined anyhow and who cares, but anger and guilt turned inward can destroy your self-esteem faster than anything. Take time to sort through these feelings and acknowledge them, then let them go. Know that when someone says, 'It will take time,' we can nod and try to accept that as part of our getting through these days, months, and years.

Remember that someday you will take the time to help someone else, and that time will be the most satisfying time of all.

—Therese Goodrich

You can help yourself through grief:

1. Acknowledge the loss.
2. Accept the pain of grief. Try to live through it, not avoid it.
3. Share your thoughts and feelings. Find enough compassionate listeners. You can talk more than one person can listen!
4. Understand each person has an individual time table for grief. Each person grieves separately and differently. We each move through grief at our own pace.
5. Find your sense of humor. Try to hang on to it!
6. Get some physical exercise. If nothing else, jog your memory.
7. Learn to hug again.
8. Accept yourself. Begin to understand you are someone new. Acknowledge that change.

—Darcie Sims

Grief is the pulling of memories into focus. It is feeling, hurting, caring. It is struggling with the guilt that we might have done things differently or better and with the anger that we are left alone. Grief, in its pain and loneliness, is the memory of a loved one, no longer here, but truly never far away.

Grief is the price we pay for love. We did not lose our children. They died, taking with them our hopes and dreams for the future, but never, never taking away their love. Though death comes, love will never go away. Hold it tight, the love our children gave us. Hold it tight through the storms of grief and bring it with you into today.

LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY.

—Darcie Sims

## **JOURNEY THROUGH TIME**

Time roars on, but I rear back,  
Resisting, afraid to move on and  
leave you behind.

I was safe with you, unafraid in my  
own realm.  
If I heal, will you be gone forever?

Your leaving opened new worlds.  
I have time now and my days and  
energies no longer revolve around  
your needs.

I want you to come with me into the  
future.  
Your youth protected my youth, but  
now new beginnings eclipse the  
past.

My eyes strain as they search my  
heart for distant memories;  
But your face fades as I reach out to you.

All that remains are warm feelings,  
smiles, tears and  
Glimpses of your love, left in the  
wake of your parting.

Will you forgive me if I go on?  
If you can't make this earthly  
journey through time with me,  
Will you then come along in my  
heart and wish me well?

—Betty Johnson

## **A NEW YEAR**

The new year comes  
When all the world is ready  
For changes, resolutions . . .  
Great beginnings.

For us, to whom  
That stroke of midnight means  
A missing child remembered,  
For us, the new year comes  
More like another darkness.

But let us not forget  
That this may be the year  
When love and hope and courage  
Find each other somewhere  
In the darkness  
To lift their voices and speak:  
Let there be light.

—Sascha Wagner

## **WHO WILL LOVE YOU?**

Who will love you when I'm gone,  
Whisper your name when twilight  
comes,  
Long to touch your hand, then shed  
a tear,  
Or write a poem to you  
As I have often done?

Who will love you when I'm gone,  
Sit in silence in your lonely room  
And dream of times when I could  
Watch you in your sleep  
As I have often done?

Who will love you when I'm gone  
And keep you in his breast  
And feel the gaping pain  
That makes me weep  
As I have often done?

Who will love you when I'm gone  
And stir up childhood memories  
Of sandboxes, swings and trains?  
I will, my son, for we will be  
Together in eternity,

—David Ziv

Sometimes love is for a moment,  
Sometimes love is for a lifetime,  
Sometimes a moment is a lifetime,

—Pamela S. Adams

## **A TRAGEDY THAT WILL LAST FOREVER**

On June 8, 1989, my life changed drastically. I was extremely excited that morning since I was getting my driver's license later in the day. Upon arriving at school, my brother Neil and I went our separate ways. Neil turned back and said, 'Good Luck! Don't mess up!' Those words will remain with me for as long as I live. They were the last words my brother said to me.

I left school early to get my driver's license. On the way home, my mother told me that Neil was sent home from school with a headache and chills. When we arrived at home, Neil was sleeping. My mother left for her law study group. Later, while I was on the phone, I heard a tremendous crash. I raced to my brother's room to find him having convulsions and in a coma. I rushed Neil to the hospital, where he was diagnosed with meningitis, a disease in which the membrane around the brain swells. On June 10th my brother was pronounced brain dead. The doctors told us we would have to make a decision as to whether or not to keep him on life support. Previously, Neil told us that if he were ever on life support, he would want us to turn off the machine. On June 11th the life-support systems were disconnected and my brother was officially pronounced dead.

At first I blamed myself for my brother's death, and for months I was in a horrible state of depression. The questions 'What if I...?' and 'If I could have...?' went through my mind over and over again. I felt that if one of us had to die, it should have been me. I would have changed places with him in a heartbeat.

Finally, I realized that there was nothing I could have done, and my life had to go on. But everything was different and I changed. I saw life through different eyes and judged people and things differently. I work harder now and I take life more seriously. You could say I try to do enough for both of us—to do everything my brother is no longer able to or never did. I feel as if Neil is still here, watching over me. I try to accomplish things that would make him proud of me.

I have grown up a lot. I joined the sibling group of *The Compassionate Friends*, where I am able to talk to others who understand what I am going through. No matter what people say, they cannot understand unless they have gone through it. I have also started a bereavement group at my school to help others talk about their feelings regarding the loss of a parent, sibling, or friend. Now when someone loses a loved one, he or she can come to me and knows that I am willing to listen. I understand. It makes me feel great knowing that I can share my experience and help others overcome a tragic loss and want to go on with their lives.

The hurt never goes away. The sharp memory of my brother will never fade. I will never forget the love, the frustration, and even the arguments we had. No one can ever take his place in my heart. When Neil died, a part of me died too,

—Madelyn Heitweil

## **IF ONLY YOU WERE, HERE TODAY**

Why does it seem to be,  
The most painful things happen to  
me?  
First one thing, then the other.

Yet, it's true, I miss my brother.  
There are so many things I'd like to  
say,  
Like, remember ice skating and  
riding that sleigh?  
But for some reason God took you  
away.

If only you were here today.  
You changed a lot in those college  
years.  
We used to go to parties or drink a  
few beers.  
Now nothing can stop those painful  
tears.

And all the games that we'd played  
Have suddenly gone away.

There is only one thing I can say,  
If only you were here today.  
You'd be proud of the things I've  
done.

It's so hard to face the morning sun.  
Oh, God, help me; I've nowhere to  
run.  
For on this day the sky is gray,  
Of course, all I could say,  
In a painful way, is  
If only you were here today.

—Michael Laba

### **BROTHER PASSED THIS WAY**

Brother passed this way.  
Walked boldly the forest paths,  
Marked the trail, a glimpse and  
Disappeared into the pines.  
Caused us to love, then gone.  
His shadow lingers, and now  
We clutch the things that were him.

Brother passed this way.  
We ran heedless through time  
While he crept carefully.  
If we had only cared  
That time would take us,  
Like the sands of the dunes  
Blown away to make anew.

Brother passed this way  
And tried to tell us the  
Colors of a monarch butterfly,  
Of water-colored sunsets,  
And words failed him.

But now he is part of the  
Flowers and grass,  
Places I lay my head.

Brother passed this way.  
No hand pressed our faces like his,  
Not even the dew that washes them  
now.  
But when we have our tears out, we  
know  
He's beyond the chances of life.

Yes, brother passes this way  
On a mighty steed across  
The dawns of all tomorrows,  
And saying good-bye is not forever,

—Robert Woodring

## **FOR COURAGE**

Growing up I can't remember any times that I felt I didn't have as much as any other kid in the neighborhood. That is something for which I will forever thank my parents. My older brother Rob and my younger brother Brian and I always had food on the table, clothes on our backs, and a box full of toys to play with. We even went to summer camp with all the kids on our block. It never occurred to any of us to wonder where the money came from. Kids seven, nine, and eleven years old rarely worry about things such as money or a lack of it. At least that's what I always thought. Years later I was told a story that made me realize maybe the youngest of us all understood the situation the most.

During these troubled times, my mother returned to the work she left when she married and had children. We assumed it was something she wanted to do, and we never felt neglected at home because our beloved grandmother lived with us and was there every afternoon when we returned from school. Both parents would leave in the morning and return home at dinner, and life went on, for us kids, as normally as it always had.

One night Brian wandered into the kitchen only to find my mother, when the pressure of work had taken its toll on her, crying to my father of how much she hated being away from home. As most parents would, they told Brian everything was fine and tucked him back into bed, believing he wouldn't think of it again. Two days later Brian walked into my parents bedroom with a small brown bag in his chubby freckled hands. He went to my mother sitting at her dressing table,

handed her the package, and simply said, 'Here, Mom, for courage.' Inside the bag was a small ceramic lion he had bought at a nearby store with his allowance money. We had recently seen the *Wizard of Oz*, and Brian knew the story of the lion and his wish for courage. This seven-year-old decided this lion was all Mom needed to stop crying and to be happy.

The little lion followed my Mom from job to job over the years. The moves caused the lion a few cracks and nicks, but it was always a part of each change in scenario. When Mom stopped working, the lion found a place on our family room bookshelf, and then the collection started to grow. There are now lion statues, pillows, and pictures, including a picture of a teenage Brian in a majestic lion costume bought to bring Mom courage during some minor surgery. We never realized how important that collection would become to us all.

In 1988 my brother Brian was killed in a car accident at the age of twenty-one. Mom has received a few lions since that day, and now the need for courage is stronger than ever. We have all prayed for the courage to live on with only memories of Brian and the hopes that we can all take a little part of him always with us to make us better people.

—Jennifer Hughes

## **BULLET**

Somebody shot a bullet, and my  
brother died.

Somebody shot a bullet, and for day  
my momma cried.

Somebody shot a bullet, and my  
brother's not here anymore.

Somebody pulled a trigger, and I  
never will know why.

Somebody pulled a trigger, and my  
brother had to die.

Somebody pulled a trigger, and I  
won't forget that bang.

Somebody pulled a trigger, to be  
accepted by a gang.

Somebody changed my world that  
night, and I'm still asking why.

Somebody changed my world that  
night when my brother had to die.

Somebody changed my world, and if  
I could, I know what I'd do,  
But I don't want to be like them—  
So God, I'll leave it up to you.

—Anonymous Teen

Sometimes—late at night—  
When the wind is perfectly still,  
When the moon shines softly  
down  
On what's supposed to be God's  
will,  
When the moon, like me, is fragile  
and pale  
And inside me grows a small fear,  
I think of you and I ponder  
The reason you're no longer here,

—Carole Blatchford

### **YOU ARE WITH ME STILL**

You are with me still—with every  
Crosby, Stills and Nash song on the  
radio, you sit with me and sing.

You are with me still—as I wear  
your black leather jacket—you  
looked so cool in it!

You are with me still—at the Dairy  
Queen where we ordered a blizzard  
with cherry nerds.

You are with me still—as I proudly  
wear the sweater you gave me for  
Christmas. I remember what you said, 'Tarm, it's you.'

You are with me still—as we  
cooked lobsters and melted butter,  
and you felt sorry for the lobsters.

You are with me still—as the music surrounds us at a rock concert, with you and me picking out T-shirts together.

You are with me still—as I slip a silver bracelet on my wrist that once was upon yours.

You are with me still—as I gaze down at your grave, yet I know you are truly not there ... for you are with me always each and every day.

—Tammy Tobac

### **I REMEMBER...**

I remember when my baby brother died, although I was only about four years old at the time. I must have been told that he had gone to heaven because the next time I saw him, he was in his small white casket. I remember a lot of people crying. I remember my Mom was not. But mostly, I remember never hearing anyone speak of my little brother again.

A few years later, my favorite cat disappeared and was never found. I cried over the loss of my pet. My family asked why I was crying, and I said it was because I loved my cat. They said I was silly. People don't love cats. So I learned to cry in private.

When I was 22 my father died. Everyone said I must be strong for my mother's sake. She cried a lot. I held my tears in. I showed everyone how strong I could be. It was hard to be strong, but I did it because that's what I was taught.

When my daughter died almost four years ago, I found out that I didn't have to be strong for anyone else. I didn't have to hide my tears, and I didn't have to stop talking about her.

We need to teach our children and others that it's normal to grieve over losses. If we help each other, then no one has to pretend to be strong. The real strength of healing will show through in time. We can cry together, not alone. And then we won't be afraid to talk about our loss. Tears can heal and memories can bring smiles to our faces,

—Cathy Heider

'To be or not to be' is the question pondered not only by Hamlet, but also by an increasing number of adolescents. The incidence of adolescent suicide under any definition is alarming and has been rising steadily during the past 20-25 years. The need for the clinical understanding of this self-destructive act is greater than ever. Psychiatric intervention is frequently the only hope for preventing a person from becoming another suicide statistic. Each psychiatrist or clinician who deals with adolescents needs to be prepared to deal with a potential suicide victim.

Suicide is one of the most dramatic acts in a dramatic phase of a human development—adolescence. Neither a child nor an adult, the adolescent is in a phase characterized by the acceleration of physiological, psychological, social and interpersonal demands. These demands influence not only overt behavior but also conscious and unconscious experiences. Adolescent suicide is a subject of fascination and controversy. It involves two human experiences of which we know the least: adolescence and death.

—Yosef Hakimi, M.D.

In the United States 12 to 18 year-olds are regarded as a population with increasing risk for both attempted and completed suicides. The suicidal rate for this age group is greater in the United States than in most other countries. It is more frequent among boys than girls, higher among non-white males, urban dwellers, college students, professional groups and American Indians. Marriage increases the risk (1.6 times more) of completed suicides in adolescents. Most of the married suicide victims, however, are childless.

—Yosef Hakimi, M.D.

Suicide is a response to internal confusion and self-disintegration. The increased tension of modern life, a combination of pressures and expectations beyond the individuals capacity to cope, provoke feelings of frustration, anger, guilt, depression and self-destruction. Early experiences of loss, deprivation or other traumatic experience (usually in the parent-child relationship) are strong predisposing factors in suicide.

Suicide is always a sign of deep psychopathology. In a study of 40 highly selected adolescents, who had made suicide attempts, [Frank E.] Crumley reported that each patient was psychiatrically ill before the suicide attempt. The most common diagnosis was depressive disorders, drug abuse or borderline personality. Each of these patients had reacted severely to a loss and poorly controlled his rage and impulsiveness. This resulted in the suicide attempt. The assessment of the internal forces that lead the adolescent to suicide is most difficult because adolescence is so much the time of impulsivity and unpredictability.

—Yosef Hakimi, M.D.

In the author's experience, poor early parent-child relationships, the mother's conscious, unconscious, verbal and non-verbal rejection of the child have been strong predisposing factors in the suicide. The adolescent interprets these messages as an indication that his parents want him to die. This usually occurs when the adolescent's ego is shaky and in the stage of turmoil.

Psychoanalytic theory relates suicide to a detachment of the libidinal tie from an object and ambivalent identification with the lost love object. Adolescence is a time of detachment and transition of the libidinal tie from parents to non-incestuous objects.

—Yosef Hakimi, M.D.

The person that attempts suicide has an abnormal conception of his own body. He perceives his body as a possession of some outside person or force. He was raised by parents whose actions made him feel early in life that he only partially owned his body. Parents can cause this by such strategies as rarely permitting the child to have privacy, being demanding and over-controlling, making the child do what they expect. Being limited to this sort of body perception, it takes the adolescent only a few traumatic experiences later in life to convince him that his body did not belong to him, but rather was an alien pain-producing-partner of some other entity.

—Yosef Hakimi, M.D.

It is against the natural order of life to bury our children. As parents and educators, we can, in time, reconcile ourselves to the loss of a child through accident or illness. But the choice of a child to end his or her own life is a different matter. We who are dedicated to nurturing human potential are appalled. Suddenly, part of the future is gone forever.

Tomorrow in the United States approximately 1,000 adolescents will attempt suicide. Eighteen will succeed. During the same period, twice as many young adults between the ages of 20 and 24 will end their lives.

—Maxine Seibel and  
Joseph N. Muray

The passing of an ordinary man is sad. The passing of a great man is tragic, and doubly tragic when the greatness passes before the man does.

—Harpo Marx

## **SIX YOUNG MEN**

David was an honor student, star quarterback on his high school football team, and a perfectionist who 'gave 100 percent' to everything he did. When he earned an athletic scholarship to a prestigious Midwest college, the community shared his family's pride. But by the beginning of his sophomore year, things were not going well.

After he was cut from the college football team, friends began to notice his despondency and strange behavior. They urged him to sign himself into the hospital. Hours later, David slipped out of the psychiatric ward and made his last run. Dashing down the corridor, he plunged through a plate glass window to his death three floors below.

Eddie's elementary teachers described him as 'immature,' 'impulsive,' and 'capable of doing more.' Despite the help he received in the learning disabilities program, Eddie never managed to graduate from high school. Late in his senior year, he got into trouble with the law. Unable to wait for the outcome of an indictment hearing, he hung himself from the back of his truck. Meanwhile, his attorney was trying to contact him to give him the good news that his case had been dismissed.

Paul, a sensitive, artistic 17-year-old, lived with his stepmother and his father, a successful advertising executive. His natural mother had been hospitalized on several occasions for emotional problems. During high school, Paul drifted into the 'punk' crowd and spent much of his time absorbed in 'heavy metal' rock. One night he was cited for driving under the influence, instead of going to school the next day, he shot himself.

Fifteen-year-old Eric was a loner in his 8th grade class. As a youngster, he had been diagnosed as 'hyperactive' and took Ritalin to control his disruptive behavior in class. Teachers described him as unhappy in school. Later they would note that he always tried very hard to please. In junior high school Eric was a tense, anxious youngster who was obsessed with militarism and teased by his schoolmates. He spent much of his time playing 'Dungeons and Dragons.' One summer afternoon he hung himself. There was no apparent reason.

Joe had a history of poor school attendance. His measured intelligence ranged from 103 to 85. He suffered from migraine headaches and got into minor disciplinary scrapes. A notation on his school records simply said 'difficult home situation.' Joe failed 7th grade but was placed in 8th grade; subsequently, he failed 8th grade and was placed in 9th grade. He failed 9th grade the following year. Now a 17-year-old freshman, he did not return to school. In the years that followed he began to drink heavily and was unable to hold a job. After his girlfriend ended their relationship, Joe was convicted on the last of several DWIs (driving while intoxicated). He ended his life.

'Dearest Family' wrote Fred in his last note. 'I just couldn't seem to get it together; then booze and pot got hold of me. I just want you to know that I love you more than I could ever say. ...' Fred was the youngest in a family that placed great value on education. Both his brother and sister already had master's degrees. But from the

first day of kindergarten, Fred had hated school. He had difficulty concentrating and could not cope with frustration. After high school graduation, he made three attempts at attending college. Dropping out for the last time, he was unable to find steady work in a depressed Midwest economy. When he was turned down by the military because of a pre-diabetic condition, he became severely depressed. Shortly after, he was picked up on his second DWI charge. Facing a long jail term, he chose to end his life.

—Maxine Seibel and  
Joseph N. Muray

THE INCIDENCE of anxiety disorders among teenagers has been increasing dramatically. Over the past decade I have worked closely with many high school principals, and I do not know of a single one who has not frequently had to coordinate intensive support efforts on behalf of depressed or suicidal youngsters. Their experience is confirmed by national statistics. During the last two decades, teenage suicides have increased by 300%. According to the *National Center for Health Statistics*, virtually all parts of the northeastern U.S. have suffered waves of adolescent suicide. Moreover, the problem cuts across all socioeconomic lines; inner-city, blue-collar, and white-collar communities have been afflicted. Suicide is now the second-leading cause of teenage deaths (topped only by vehicle fatalities). For every completed suicide among high school students, there are some 350 suicide attempts, and one study places the proportion of high school students who will attempt suicide in any given month at 3%.

—Maxine Seibel and  
Joseph N. Muray

1. **Young people who have attempted suicide in the past or who talk about suicide are at greater risk** for future attempts. Listen for hints like ‘I’d be better off dead’ or ‘I won’t be a problem for you much longer’ or ‘Nothing matters; it’s no use.’
2. **Adolescents who consider suicide generally feel alone, hopeless, and rejected.** They are more vulnerable to having these feelings if they have been abused, feel they have been recently humiliated in front of family or friends, have parents with alcohol or drug problems, or have a family life with parental discord, disruptions, separation or divorce. However, a teenager may be depressed and/or suicidal without any of these.
3. **Many teens who abuse alcohol or drugs are likely to consider, attempt or succeed at suicide.** The *Fifth Special Report to the U.S. Congress on Alcohol and Health*...found that as many as 80 percent of people who attempt suicide have been drinking at the time. And alcohol is a depressant.

4. **Teenagers who are planning to commit suicide might ‘clean house’ by giving away favorite possessions, cleaning their rooms, or throwing things away.** They may also become suddenly cheerful after a period of depression, because they think they have ‘found the solution’ by deciding to end their lives.
5. **One of the most dangerous times of a teen’s life is when he or she has suffered a loss or humiliation of some kind:** loss of self-esteem by doing poorly on a test, the breakup with a boyfriend or girlfriend, or the trauma of parents’ divorce.

—*American Psychiatric Association*

**NEW FINDINGS:** Every day, psychiatric research is finding new clues to the causes of depression and suicide. Among them:

1. Depression and the risk for suicide might have biological as well as psychological causes. Studies have found that some people who are depressed have altered levels of certain brain chemicals. Other studies have shown that aggressive and impulsive people who make violent suicide attempts have reduced amounts of serotonin, a key brain chemical.
2. Family history of suicide is a significant risk factor in a young person. The family link might be because young people often identify with those closest to them and are likely to repeat their actions. However, there may be a genetic link as well, because biological relatives of a suicidal person are six times more likely to attempt or succeed in suicide than are adoptive relatives.

—*American Psychiatric Association*

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO:**

Most people who are depressed or who are thinking about suicide don’t or won’t talk about how they are feeling. They feel worthless. They have no hope. They deny their emotions or think that talking about their emotions will be a ‘burden’ on others because no one cares. Or they are afraid others will make fun of them.

That’s understandable, because when someone mentions suicide, others may treat it as a joke or deny it. Those reactions only make the problem worse. So, if a friend or relative brings up the subject, take it seriously and take some time to talk about it.

1. Reassure that person that he or she does have someone to turn to. Parents, friends, school counselors, physicians, teachers, or a brother or sister are probably all too willing to listen. It’s just hard to let them know we want to talk about something as serious as our emotions.

2. Don't lecture or point out all the reasons a person has to live. Instead, listen and reassure the individual that depression and suicidal tendencies can be treated. Depressive disorders respond readily to treatments such as psychotherapy or appropriate medication. Antidepressants can act within two to three weeks and often are used in addition to psychotherapy. Nearly 90 percent of all people suffering depression respond to these treatments.
3. You can find help by contacting your local chapter of the *American Psychiatric Association*, which can suggest a psychiatrist who can help you. Psychiatrists are physicians who have special training in emotional and mental health. Other sources include your local mental health association, your family physician, a county medical society, a local hospital's department of psychiatry, a mood disorders program that is affiliated with a university or medical school, or a family service/social agency.

—*American Psychiatric  
Association*

## **HOW TO FIGHT TEENAGE SUICIDE: GUIDE TO THE DANGER SIGNALS**

Suicidal behavior among teenagers can be spotted in time, according to physicians at the University of Michigan Medical Center. They have developed and successfully tested a profile to help parents and professionals identify potential teenage suicide victims. Dr. Norman Alessi, who is assistant professor of psychiatry at the U-M Medical Center and director of the *Child and Adolescent Affective Disorders Program* at the U-M Medical Center, and Dr. Douglas R. Robbins, former assistant professor of psychiatry at the U-M Medical Center, developed their suicide profile from a study of 27 males and 37 female teens who were hospitalized at the U-M Medical Center's Children's Psychiatric Hospital.

Examples of important clues to watch for are depressed mood, anhedonia (lack of a sense of pleasure), social withdrawal, decreased performance in school, and a noticeable increase in substance use.

The researchers found that the combination of a depressed mood with drug or alcohol abuse is the deadliest combination,

In his research, Alessi found two general types of suicidal teens. One is the teen who seems to be doing well with friends, in school, and in the other areas of his life, then undergoes a marked change. School performance falls, personal hygiene decreases, he or she withdraws socially, has problems sleeping, and begins losing weight.

'Many of these teens have a biological disposition favoring suicide,' Alessi said. 'A chemical imbalance develops in the brain. Usually there is a history of depression, alcoholism, and suicide in their families. Some of these people are being treated now with drugs to help restore the chemical imbalance, but much more research is needed to effectively help these people, who are considered biological time bombs,'

The second type of suicidal teen is one who has not done well in school. This teen is found on the fringe of social activities and may have a learning disability. ‘People around them usually see this teen as a loser, not as an accepted person,’ Alessi said, ‘This teen feels tremendous despair because he begins defining himself according to how others see him. This teen also seems to have a higher potential for suicide.’

—University of Michigan  
Medical Center,  
*Health News  
Service*

- MYTH Adolescents who talk about killing themselves rarely commit suicide.  
FACT Many adolescents who commit suicide have declared or hinted at their intent, so suicidal threats and attempts should always be treated seriously.
- MYTH The tendency toward suicide is inherited and passed from generation to generation.  
FACT Suicide is a behavior and, as such, is not inherited. However, research indicates that emotional disorders, such as depression, may be inherited. Therefore, children in some families may carry a higher likelihood of self-destruction than those in others.
- MYTH The suicidal person wants to die and feels that there is no turning back.  
FACT Suicidal people often are ambivalent about dying and frequently will call for help immediately following an attempted suicide.
- MYTH Suicidal people are mentally ill.  
FACT Although many suicidal adolescents are depressed and distraught, most of them cannot be diagnosed as seriously mentally ill.
- MYTH If someone attempts suicide, he will always entertain thoughts of suicide.  
FACT Most adolescents who are suicidal are that way for only a brief period in their lives. If a young person who attempts suicide receives the proper assistance and support, he may never be suicidal again.
- MYTH If you ask an adolescent about her suicidal intentions, you will encourage the young person to kill herself.  
FACT Actually, the opposite is true. Asking someone directly about a suspected suicidal intent often will lower her anxiety level by encouraging her to vent pent-up emotions, thus deterring the act of self-destruction.
- MYTH Suicide is more prevalent among lower socioeconomic groups.  
FACT Suicide crosses all socioeconomic groups and no one class is more susceptible to it than another.

- MYTH        When a depression lifts, there is no longer any danger of suicide.  
 FACT        The greatest danger of suicide exists during the first three months  
               after an adolescent recovers from a deep depression.
- MYTH        Suicide is a spontaneous activity that occurs without warning.  
 FACT        While some youth suicides may be spontaneous, most suicidal  
               adolescents plan their self-destruction in advance.

—Dr. Thomas C. Barrett

Emotional abuse is the most insidious and prevalent kind of abuse. Over a long period of time, it can make a child feel so inadequate that he wants to commit suicide.

—Nancy Peterson

What leads an adolescent to self-destructive behavior? Here are some of the more common motives for suicide, which also can be reasons for other forms of self harm.

**Revenge.** When revenge is the motive, the driving force behind suicide is anger—anger which cannot be directed at the intended target and is therefore directed at oneself, according to E. S. Shneidman, a psychologist and founder of the *American Association of Suicidology*. For many teenagers who consider suicide, the target of their anger is their parents, the partner in a failed romance, or another important person whom the victim perceives as having rejected her. Death is in retaliation for abandonment or the threat of abandonment.

**Manipulation.** Some teenagers use the threat of suicide to try to gain love from others. They attempt to control relationships in their lives by making others responsible. These youngsters are often considered to have disordered personalities.

**Stabilizing Relationships.** Some teenagers threaten suicide in an attempt to stabilize relationships. An attempted suicide may be a tool to divert attention away from family or marital conflicts, for instance.

**Atonement for One's Sins.** Some youths attempt suicide because they feel they have been 'bad.' For example, a young person who believes that his 'bad' behavior caused his parents divorce may feel guilty. In extreme cases, the guilt might stem from feeling responsible for the death of a parent.

**A Cry for Help.** Suicidal behavior contains a very definite message for those who recognize it. It is a distress signal indicating that a young person is engulfed by feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. The behavior is a method of communicating to others, 'I no longer can cope and I need help to stay alive.'

**Death of a Parent.** Some teens commit suicide when they can't come to terms with the death of a parent. The nature of the relationship with the deceased parent prior to his or her death, and that with the remaining parent, are critical.

**The Only Way Out.** Some youths believe suicide is the only way to escape intolerable situations such as physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Suicide may appear to be the only way out of cult membership also.

**Reaction to Stress.** Some youths take their lives when they experience a number of stressful situations at the same time. They view their problems to be collectively unmanageable, and they feel they are failures at life. This can happen to youths who adults perceive as successful and well-adjusted.

—Dr. Thomas C. Barrett

## **BASIC INTERVENTION STRATEGIES**

Although those who are not trained as mental health professionals should be cautious in dealing with a young person who might be suicidal, what they do between the time they recognize this fact and the time the potential victim gets professional help could save her life. Because suicidal adolescents feel disconnected and alone, the most effective thing to do is to help them feel ‘connected.’

Here are some ways to both make that correction and, possibly, stave off a potential suicide.

1. Be willing to listen. Reflect back to the young person the thoughts and feelings being expressed. This will help her feel that you truly are trying to understand her.
2. Show interest and support for the young person’s feelings as well as for the information that she is giving you.
3. Don’t judge the young person’s problems using adult standards. For example, the grief a teenager experiences over the loss of a love relationship is real. To discount these feelings may lead a young person to doubt that you are someone who can help her.
4. Trust your intuition. If a young person is not expressing suicidal thoughts, but you suspect they exist, ask. For example, say, ‘You seem to be in a great deal of emotional pain and I am concerned about your safety. Have you been thinking of hurting yourself or even killing yourself as a way of making all of this go away?’
5. Don’t panic if the answer is ‘yes.’ The young person’s feelings are finally out in the open. This alone can provide tremendous relief to him.
6. Avoid countering or saying, ‘No, you can’t.’ Some young people feel that the only control they have in their lives is the choice to live or die, and it might be a mistake to challenge this one last shred of control. The goal is to delay the impulse for suicide until other possibilities can be explored. One way to do this is to tell the young person: ‘No one can really prevent you from harming yourself if that is what you really want to do. But then again, no one can stop you a week from now or a month from now either. So, I suggest you postpone it until other solutions can be explored.’
7. Don’t be judgmental. Accept as truth what the young person is telling you. Don’t discount his feelings by giving advice.

8. Don't allow yourself to be sworn to secrecy.
9. Get help from a mental health professional or agency in the community. Don't take on the role of a mental health therapist. Stick to the role of friend, confidant, and helper.

—Dr. Thomas C. Barrett

## **WHAT GRIEVING CHILDREN NEED TO DO**

Grief thoughts and feelings are continuous and ever changing, inundating bereaved children's lives like waves on the ocean. These thoughts and feelings may arrive without warning, and children feel unprepared for their enormity in a school setting. How can teachers help? By recognizing that these children often need to do the following:

1. They need to acknowledge a parent or sibling who died by using his or her name or by sharing a memory.
2. They need to use tools such as drawing, writing, role-playing, and re-enactment to safely project feelings and thoughts, about their loss.
3. They need to be allowed to go to a safe place outside the classroom when overwhelming feelings arise, without explaining why in front of classmates.
4. They need to call their surviving parent during the school day or visit the school nurse for reassurance that they and their family are okay. Such reality checks counteract children's preoccupation with their own health and the health of their loved ones.
5. They need physical ways (like memory books) to re-experience and share memories in a safe way.

—Linda Goldman

## **TEENAGE SUICIDE: 13 DEADLY MYTHS**

1. Nothing could have stopped her once she decided to kill herself.
2. The person who fails at suicide the first time will eventually succeed.
3. People who talk about killing themselves never do.
4. When he talks about killing himself, he's just looking for attention. Ignoring him is the best thing to do.
5. Talking about suicide to a troubled person may give him morbid ideas.
6. People under a psychiatrist's care rarely commit suicide,
7. Suicides often occur out of the blue.
8. People who kill themselves are insane.
9. Once a person tries to kill himself and fails, the excruciating pain and shame will keep him from trying again.
10. Once the depression seems to be lifting, would-be suicides are out of danger.

11. Only a certain type of youngster commits suicide, and my child just isn't the type.
12. Suicides are mainly old people with only a few years left to live.
13. Suicides run in families, so you can't do much to prevent it.

—Dr. Mary Griffin and  
Carol Felsenthal

Adolescent suicide is a topic that has for too long been shrouded in silence. Our western Judeo-Christian ethic has caused us to view suicide as cowardly, shameful, and sinful and for this reason it has become a topic that makes us feel uncomfortable, unsure, and threatened. We are confused about suicide because we have difficulty comprehending the magnitude of despair that would cause a human being to take his or her life.

Because we are so uncomfortable with the topic, it is important that we discuss the subject, forcing ourselves to struggle with the implied problem of values that are involved with suicide. We must find solutions that will keep youth from viewing suicide as the only alternative.

The very morning the author began to write this monograph, the daily newspaper headlined: 'Teen Shoots Self in Class' and 'Teen Suicide's Body Found.' We are all familiar with these kinds of reports in local papers throughout the country. Sensationalism? Hardly. As you read this...there will be one adolescent suicide attempted each minute somewhere in the country. Today 18 youths will succeed in their attempt. This year 6,500 young people will commit suicide. Even more astounding is that these numbers may be low, for many suicides go unreported, are masked, or fall under the category of one-car auto accidents. Researchers tend to agree that the 'real' numbers of adolescent suicides could be as many as four times the number reported. Not 18 suicides today but perhaps 72! Not 6,500 suicides this year, but perhaps more than 25,000!

These are frightening statistics; in fact, the subject is frightening. However, it is imperative that we cast aside the taboos associated with suicide, that we reject the conspiracy of silence that has surrounded the word, and that we set ourselves to the task of developing and initiating meaningful programs that will virtually eliminate suicide as an alternative in the minds of youth.

—Richard A. Dempsey

## **ON EDUCATION**

He always wanted to explain things.

But no one cared.

So he drew.

Sometimes he would draw and it wasn't anything.

He wanted to carve it in stone or write it in the sky.  
He would lie out on the grass and look up in the sky.  
And it would be only him and the sky and the  
things inside him that needed saying.  
And it was after that he drew the picture.  
It was a beautiful picture.  
He kept it under his pillow and would let no one see it.  
And he would look at it every night and think about it.  
And when it was dark, and his eyes were closed, he could still see it.  
And it was all of him. And he loved it.  
When he started school he brought it with him.  
Not to show anyone but just to have with him like a friend.  
It was funny about school.  
He sat in a square, brown desk  
Like all the other square, brown desks  
And he thought it should be red. And his room was a square, brown room,  
Like all the other rooms,  
And it was tight and close.  
And stiff.  
He hated to hold the pencil and chalk,  
With his arm stiff and his feet flat on the  
floor;  
Stiff,  
With the teacher watching and watching.  
The teacher came and spoke to him.  
She told him to wear a tie like all the other  
boys.  
He said he didn't like them.  
And she said it didn't matter!  
After that they drew.  
And he drew all yellow and it was the way he  
felt about morning.  
And it was beautiful.  
The teacher came and smiled at him.  
'What's this?' she said. 'Why don't you draw  
something like Ken's drawing?  
Isn't that beautiful?'  
After that his mother bought him a tie.  
And he always drew airplanes and rocketships  
like everyone else.

And he threw the old picture away  
And when he lay alone looking at the sky,  
It was big and blue and all of everything,  
But he wasn't anymore.  
He was square inside  
And brown.  
And his hands were stiff.  
And he was like everyone else.  
And the things inside him that needed saying  
didn't need it anymore,  
It had stopped pushing,  
It was crushed.  
Stiff  
Like everything else.

(Written by a high school senior, two weeks before he committed suicide.)

—Arthur Daigon and  
Richard A.  
Dempsey

## **MYTHS ABOUT SUICIDE**

Numerous myths have developed over the years about suicide and the suicidal person. We should explore some of these myths in hopes of setting the record straight and getting an accurate focus on the subject.

**MYTH 1.** Those who openly talk about suicide never commit it

There has long been a tragic belief that those who threaten suicide never follow through with the act. Research indicates that as many as 60 percent of those who commit suicide have made statements about their intentions to someone. Verbal threats or even reference to suicide should be construed as a cry for help. Adolescents who openly discuss the alternative of suicide may be asking for intervention. If the cry for help is not heard, or, if heard is not treated seriously the outcome may be tragic.

**MYTH 2.** There are suicidal-type people.

Suicide knows no racial, sexual, economic, social, mental, physical, or biological restrictions. The death of a parent by suicide can increase the potential for self-destruction by an adolescent. If that parent is viewed as a positive role model by the youth, the adult's solution can then become the adolescent's solution. Generally speaking, however, death by suicide cannot be 'type-cast.'

MYTH 3. Suicidal people are completely intent on dying.

Most people who attempt or commit suicide are undecided about whether or not to continue to live. They tend to gamble with death, trusting and hoping that others will help them. Nearly no one commits suicide who has not told others in some fashion how he or she is feeling.

MYTH 4. Once a person becomes suicidal, he or she is suicidal forever.

Research tells us that people who consider self-destruction are in that state for only limited periods of time. This does not mean that this state cannot periodically recur when the individual's perceptions of life become clouded. But if the person receives help when it is needed, there is good reason to believe that suicide as a solution can be removed from the person's alternatives.

MYTH 5. Improvement after a suicidal crisis or attempt means the risk is over.

The turmoil of an attempted suicide can be devastating to an individual, usually creating emotional exhaustion. Research indicates that most suicides occur within about three months after the signs of recovery from an attempted suicide have been observed. It is at this point that the individual usually has sufficient energy to put suicidal thoughts back into action.

MYTH 6. Suicide victims are always mentally ill or psychotic.

Studies of hundreds of genuine suicide notes indicate that suicidal people are extremely unhappy and not necessarily mentally ill. They are suffering from a complex set of forces that manifests itself in seemingly hopeless dependency—a feeling that joy and optimism are not obtainable and that life is not worth the continued hassle.

MYTH 7. Suicide happens without warning.

In most cases, many clues are given that might alert friends and family to the possibility of an impulsive act. It is extremely important that we are attuned to these clues. One of the most obvious indicators of potential basis for suicidal behavior is a rapid change or drastic alteration in one's moods, ambition, interests, involvements, and, in general, a change in lifestyle.

MYTH 8. Inquiring about suicide plans will increase the likelihood of a suicide.

Asking about suicidal thoughts in depressed persons does not increase the risk of suicide. It is important to determine the person's intent. To discuss these plans openly and honestly can do much to put the problems into focus.

—Richard A. Dempsey

## **WARNING SIGNS**

Against the background of the myths and potential causes for adolescent suicide are certain warning signs which the perceptive observer should know. Some of these clues may be very observable in one potential suicidal person and less obvious in another. Regardless, it is important to be aware that the warning signs for suicide generally fall into three categories: verbal clues, behavioral clues, and situational clues.

### **Verbal Clues**

What appear to be empty verbal comments can provide clues to some deeper thinking on the part of the potentially suicidal person. Comments such as 'Life is always such a downer,' 'I wonder if there really is life after death' or 'How do you leave your body to science?' can be clues that a person is really asking for help. More direct statements such as 'I wish I were dead' and 'You will all be sorry when I'm gone' may reflect the accurate feelings of the speaker.

Neither direct nor indirect statements such as these should go unacknowledged by those associated with the young person, for they may very well signal suicide intent. Awareness of the problem and listening to youth—especially statements related to loneliness, hopelessness, helplessness, and death—can often be the greatest preventive measure a person can take.

### **Behavioral Clues**

Certain behavioral signs that adults should be aware of can signal suicide contemplation. These may include giving away valued possessions—...items that belong solely to the adolescent. The primary reason for this behavior is merely to get one's affairs in order.

Other signs are abrupt changes in mood such as extreme melancholy or despondence, often accompanied by a desire to seek isolation and withdrawal. Still other signs include inordinate irritability lack of ability to concentrate or make decisions, showing excessive guilt feelings, and excessive complaining about trivial annoyances.

### **Situational Clues**

Situational clues can range from what adults may see as an inconsequential setback to a major disaster in an adolescent's life. But because the youth's experiential background is usually shallow, these situations can be seen as equally overwhelming. Adults may view a youth's not getting the summer job, not getting into his or her first choice of college, the loss of a friend who moves away or wrecking the family car as not being catastrophic. The adolescent, on the other hand, often views these differently. To the teenager, these may be seen as equally climactic as a prolonged illness or the loss of a close loved one. For this reason, adults must become

attuned to the values of the adolescent and be more aware of what is ‘really important’ to young people.

### **Prevention Techniques**

In the prevention of suicide, teachers, counselors, and administrators must be aware of the reasons for adolescent suicide as well as the clues people who may be contemplating it give. When school personnel become aware of the messages a student is sending, the most important thing they can do is listen calmly. It should be assumed that the implied threat is, in actuality, a real threat. The casual comment cannot be put off until after school. It requires the immediate attention of a caring, trusting person who can draw out the student.

**Ten critical questions** that can create insight into the adolescent’s problems are:

**How will you do it?** Depending on the vagueness or specificity of the plan, the adult should be able to determine a low (no plan) risk factor to a high (use of a quick method, such as a gun or jumping) risk factor.

**How much do you want to die?** Cognitive therapists ask their patients to place their wish to die on a three-point continuum, with 1. representing little desire to die, 2. a moderate desire, and 3. a great desire.

**How much do you want to live?** This question forces the student to think about living. The student can at least begin to focus on reasons for living. Again, a three-point scale is used, with 1. representing little desire to live, 2. a moderate desire, and 3. a great desire to live. Cognitive therapists have said that when depression is present, the person’s thinking is distorted. These cognitive distortions include the all-or-nothing thoughts about death that prompt suicidal actions.

**How often do you have these thoughts?** The adult counselor should know whether the student rarely thinks of suicide (low risk) or is constantly thinking about it (high risk).

**When you are thinking of suicide, how long do the thoughts stay with you?** The adult counselor must know whether the thoughts are under control. Reports that the thoughts are almost out of control (running away) are indications of high risk. Further questioning includes inquiries to determine whether the student can turn off the thoughts, perhaps switching to others less threatening, or can counter with thoughts of reasons for living. Evidence of loss of control of the impulse to commit suicide demands a referral for psychiatric evaluation.

**Is there anyone or anything to stop you?** This looks for the student's support system or lifeline. When a support system is lacking, it is necessary for the counselor to become the lifeline temporarily until resource persons are identified or the life crisis that is prompting suicidal thoughts gets resolved. Efforts should be made to involve a person who has a significant relationship with the student in monitoring the student's behavior during the time of crisis. If the student is uncooperative and, in the judgment of the counselor, there is a serious threat of a suicide attempt, the counselor is ethically permitted to notify the family. The student should be advised if this step is taken.

**Have you ever attempted suicide?** Another myth about suicide is that once an attempt has been made, the person will not try again. A history of suicidal thinking, gestures, or attempts represents high risk, and referral to mental health resources is needed. The student with a history of suicidal behavior requires ongoing therapy.

**Do you have a plan?** If the student has made final plans, such as choosing a specific time, giving personal possessions to friends, writing notes, or saying 'good-bye,' the risk is very high and referral action is required. Few plans, vague plans, or no plans lower the risk factor.

**On a scale from 1 to 10, what is the probability that you will kill yourself?**

The student's answer to this question will offer a clear signal to take referral action or not. Again, the explanation of the cognitive therapist is that this type of question confronts the all-or-nothing thinking that suicidal persons are experiencing.

What has happened that makes life not worth living? This question begins the investigation of the events that have precipitated so much stress in the student's life, that the feelings of depression, helplessness, and hopelessness are overwhelming. Counselors probe for loss in the student's life and identify the sources of stress. This question is a bridge between the evaluation of the risk of suicide and continuation of counseling. When the decision is to refer the student, there is no need to use this question.

—Richard A. Dempsey

Sudden adolescent death is very traumatic to all concerned, and its impact on the school can be enormous. Generally speaking, principals have no experiential base or formal training upon which to draw in responding to the circumstances. Yet the students, the faculty and the community all look to principals for guidance and direction. They expect some sort of undefined leadership where a sudden void has been created.

What does one do? What should be done first? How does one provide the leadership and stability in a school community that is acutely distressed?

These are heavy questions that must be addressed by principals. Suffice it to say that there are no single answers to a problem so loaded with emotion. In every instance the situation and conditions are different. The impact on the student body of the death of one youth may be quite different from that of another youth. The external support system needed by one family may differ significantly from the needs of another family.

It is important, therefore, that principals understand the great emotional upheaval that suicide creates and that they take deliberate steps to reduce the painful remorse among the living.

....During the course of events that surround the incident, principals are expected to display composed, steady leadership. While others may vent their emotions openly, principals are expected to remain calm or even stoic and in so doing bottle up their personal emotions. It is imperative that principals understand this, find ways of taking stock of their emotions, and not harbor them too long. The impact of an adolescent suicide can haunt a person for a long time, and for this reason steps may need to be taken to talk out one's feelings with a professional counselor.

Principals should not hesitate to do this. As professional leaders of their schools, as the parent figure of the school family their emotional balance during and after the shock of a student suicide is vital to the success of the school's efforts to deal with this consequence-laden tragedy.

—Richard A. Dempsey

Children who grieve over the death of a parent, grandparent, brother or sister, or friend often are 'the forgotten mourners,' says Susan Smith, author of a book by that name. Smith and other researchers on childhood and adolescent bereavement say most adults mistakenly assume that kids bounce back after a short mourning period. And they incorrectly believe that kids' grief steadily diminishes until it ends for good.

But grief often submerges and re-emerges, in varying intensity, for months and years. How children and teens understand death—and how they grieve— depends on factors such as age and developmental stage; ethnic culture and beliefs; and whether the death was caused by disease, accident, or suicide.

Many children experience 'complicated grief' that involves serious and long-lasting physical and emotional reactions, says Columbia University's Grace Christ, who explains how children's developmental stages affect their understanding of death and the form their mourning takes:

3-to 5-year-olds do not understand the permanence of death; ask repeatedly when the deceased person is coming back; are frightened by adults' grieving; demand a replacement for the deceased. Complicated grief includes anxiety and regressive behaviors longer than six months after the death.

6- to 8-year-olds understand that death is universal and permanent; assume blame and guilt for the death; mourn through stories, pictures, and remembrances.

Complicated grief includes school refusal, physical symptoms, suicidal thoughts, and regressive emotions and behavior.

9- to 11-year-olds demand detailed information about the death; avoid sadness and other strong emotions; increasingly express anger; feel a sense of the deceased's presence. Complicated grief includes shunning friends and increased moodiness and misbehavior three to six months after the death.

12- to 14-year-olds act callous, indifferent, and egocentric; strongly sense the deceased person's presence; ...take comfort in the deceased's clothing and possessions. Complicated grief includes refusing to attend school, persistent depression, drug or alcohol use, associating with delinquents, and precocious sexual behavior.

15- to 17-year-olds express thoughtfulness and empathy; resist excessive demands at home; feel overwhelmed by survivors' emotional dependence and grief; grieve in adult-like ways with sadness and painful memories, but grief is of shorter duration; worry about their own vulnerability and death; have private conversations with the deceased. Complicated grief includes mood swings, withdrawal from friends and group activities, poor school performance, and high-risk behaviors such as drug use.

—Susan Black

## **RECOGNIZING CHILDREN'S GRIEF**

How will adults know when a grieving child needs extra help?

The *American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* advises parents and teachers to consider referring a child for therapeutic counseling if these grief related symptoms persist for an extended period:

1. Severe depression that results in little interest in daily activities
2. Inability to eat and sleep normally
3. Fear of being alone
4. Imitation of the deceased
5. Repeatedly wishing to join the deceased
6. Loss of interest in play and friends
7. Refusal to attend school
8. Steady drop in school achievement.

—*American Academy of  
Child and  
Adolescent  
Psychiatry*

Next to accidents, suicide ranks as the second leading cause of death among teenagers and young adults. Moreover, for every completed suicide, estimates suggest there are 50 to 200 attempts.

—Marcia L. McEvoy and  
Alan W. McEvoy

## WHEN TO BECOME INVOLVED

What are the warning signs that a young person is 'at risk'—a potential suicide victim? Educators should become involved if two or more characteristics are evident in a young person:

1. Is a victim of domestic violence, child abuse, rape, or other assault
2. Has previously attempted suicide or has known a family member, relative, or friend who committed suicide
3. Is an extreme perfectionist
4. Is more withdrawn, uncommunicative, and isolated than usual
5. Has developed a phobia about school
6. Is unable to develop significant and empathetic relationships
7. Demonstrates any change in behavior or attitude
8. Exhibits daredevil or self-abuse behaviors
9. Drops out of school or changes classes
10. Expresses a desire to die
11. Leaves poems, diaries, drawings, or letters to be easily found.

—Steven Bruno

In even a single murder, the victims are multiple. Not one but at least two whole families die, that of the victim, and that of the perpetrator, and...the damage is exponential to mothers, fathers, brothers, sons, daughters.

—Sally Jenkins

Run, if you like, but try to keep your breath;  
Work like a man, but don't be worked to death.

--Oliver Wendell Holmes

Too much work and too much energy kills a man just as effectively as too much assorted vice or too much drink.

--Rudyard Kipling

More men are killed by overwork than the importance of the world justifies.

--Rudyard Kipling

A life spent in constant labor is a life wasted, save a man be such a fool as to regard a fulsome obituary notice as ample reward.

--George Jean Nathan

In Japan, employees occasionally work themselves to death. It's called Karoshi. I don't want that to happen to anybody in my department. The trick is to take a break as soon as you see a bright light and hear dead relatives beckon.

--*Dilbert* Comic Strip

You'll be old and you never lived, and you kind of feel silly to lie down and die and to never have lived, to have been a job chaser and never have lived.

--Gertrude Stein

Many a man works himself to death by burying himself in his work.

--Evan Esar

We are not free. It was not intended we should be. A book of rules is placed in our cradle, and we never get rid of it until we reach our graves. Then we are free, and only then.

--Ed Howe

Man is born in a day, and he dies in a day, and the thing is easily over; but to have a sick heart for three-fourths of one's lifetime is simply to have death renewed every morning; and life at that price is not worth living.

—Gilbert Parker

Death is not extinguishing the light; it is putting out the lamp because dawn has come.

—Rabindranath Tagore

A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you and were helped by you will remember you when forget-me-nots have withered. Carve your name on hearts, not on marble.

—Charles Spurgeon

If people bring so much courage to this world, the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks every one and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these, you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry.

--Ernest Hemingway

How will you spend eternity? Smoking or non-smoking?

—Internet Meme

We are expected to be pretty and well-dressed until we drop.

—Edith Wharton

I used to eat a lot of natural foods until I learned that most people die of natural causes.

—T-Shirt Slogan

Death, so called, is a thing which makes men weep,  
And yet a third of life is passed in sleep.

—Lord Byron

## I WAS DYING

First I was dying to finish high school and start college.  
And then I was dying to finish college and start working.  
And then I was dying to marry and have children.  
And then I was dying for my children to grow old enough for school so I could return  
to work.

And then I was dying to retire.

And now I am dying...and suddenly I realize I forgot to live.

—Unknown

The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live.  
Which is better God only knows.

—Plato

The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.

—Mark Twain

Immortality, it turns out, is not such an easy sell: most people don't like the idea of living forever. In legends of old as well as in recent popular culture, eluding death typically comes at a terrible cost; like zombies or vampires, immortal beings must feast on the living. Besides, a large percentage of today's population also subscribes to religious beliefs in which the afterlife is something to be welcomed. When the *Pew Research Center* asked Americans in 2013 whether they would use technologies that allowed them to live to 120 or beyond, 56% said no. Two thirds of respondents believed that radically longer lifespans which strain natural resources, and these treatments would only ever be available to the wealthy.

— Elmo Keep

There are more elderly people alive now than there have ever been in the history of the planet. That means we're about to face a lot of death.

— Rachel Maguire

By 2025 or 2030, there will be more of a culture of dying and lots of different ways of experiencing it. There are early signs of new types of funerals and spiritual formations around this.

—Rachel Maguire

Any stupid ass can die. That's easy. Living is tough.

—Jack LaLanne

No one can be said to be happy until he is dead.

—Solon

There's already a huge disparity between the lifespans of rich and poor Americans, and critics of new longevity research worry the gap may only grow wider. A 2016 report from the *Brookings Institution* found that, for men born in 1920, there was a six-year difference in life expectancy between men at the top 10% and bottom 10% of their earnings ladder. For men born in 1950, the difference was 14 years. For women, the gap grew from 4.7 to 13 years. In other words, advances in medicine haven't helped low income Americans nearly as much as their wealthier counterparts.

—Elmo Keep

Our care should not be to have lived long as to have lived enough.

—Lucius Annaeus Seneca

We have many cases of men committing suicide rather than face their own individuality. I know of no case of a woman who committed suicide because she was gay.

—George Weinberg

I concede nothing until they throw dirt on my face.

—John Monks

All the winds go sighing,  
For sweet things dying.

—Christina Rossetti

Birthdays are nice to have, but too many will kill a person.

—Unknown

‘Dying is easy. Comedy is hard.’

Maybe you’ve heard that one before. Nobody’s quite sure who first said it, but all stand-up comics vouch for its veracity. Live comedy is difficult, dangerous work. Comics ‘kill’ when they succeed and ‘die’ when they don’t. It’s life and death up on that stage all by yourself.

—Robert Love

I intend to make my ending good. I’m hoping it’s one of those long, lingering deathbed conversions. A lot of people go, ‘Oh, I hope I just die quick.’ Not me. I need time to put things right.

—John Mellencamp

After losing a parent, many children are surprisingly resilient. They go on to live happy childhoods and become well-adjusted adults.

—Adam Grant

That we must all die, we always knew; I wish I had remembered it sooner.

—Samuel Johnson

I have always done my duty. I am ready to die. My only regret is for the friends I leave behind me.

—Zachary Taylor

When you are dead, you don’t even know that you are dead. It’s only pain for others—Same thing when you are stupid.

—Bill Nye

Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

—Peter Lynch

Hitherto man had to live with the idea of death as an individual; from now onward mankind will have to live with the idea of its death as a species.

--Arthur Koestler

These heroes are dead. They died for liberty—they died for us. They are at rest. They sleep in the land they made free, under the flag they rendered stainless, under the solemn pines, the sad hemlocks, the tearful willows, and the embracing vines. They sleep beneath the shadows of the clouds, careless alike of sunshine or of storm,

each in the windowless Palace of Rest. Earth may run red with other wars—they are at peace. In the midst of battle, in the roar of conflict, they found the serenity of death. I have one sentiment for soldiers living and dead: cheers for the living, tears for the dead.

--Robert G. Ingersoll

It is better that we live ever so  
Miserably than die in glory.

--Euripides

It is sweet and glorious to die for one's country.

--Horace

A single death is a tragedy; a million deaths is a statistic.

--Joseph Stalin

The soldier's trade, verily and essentially, is not slaying, but being slain.

--John Ruskin

It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather we should thank God that such men lived.

—General George S.  
Patton, Jr.

Dear Madam,—I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts, that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle.

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.

I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours, to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of Freedom.  
Yours, very sincerely and respectfully.

--President Abraham  
Lincoln

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short day ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

--John McCrae

One study of veterans found that surviving a friend in combat is tied to more severe symptoms of grief than losing a spouse, even 30 years later, and even if the spouse died in the last six months.

--Tony Dokoupil

Dear Mom and Dad,  
From the people I've talked to over here I've come up with some new ideas on the war here. For the most part, nobody is particularly wild with patriotic feeling for the war. There are, of course, those who just get a real charge out of killing people. One lieutenant I talked to said what a kick it had been to roll a gook 100 yards down the beach with his machine gun. But most people generate their enthusiasm for two reasons: One is self-preservation—if I don't shoot him, he'll eventually shoot me—and the other is revenge. It's apparently quite something to see a good friend blown apart by a VC booby trap and you want to retaliate in kind.

--Robert Ransom, Jr.  
*Letters from a  
Dead GI, March  
27, 1968*

Dear Mom and Dad,

I lost my first man last week. He was killed by accident by another man in the platoon. I had sent a squad out on night ambush. They had been set up in position for a few hours when the flank man crawled away to take a leak or something and as he was crawling back to position another man mistook him for a dink and shot him. He died in the chopper that dusted him off. Of course it really tears me up to lose a man, especially like that, but I must not show any emotion over it. I've got to press on, keep doing my job. Even among my men this is universal. They are saddened by the death of a buddy, but he is gone. The concern among the team (for that is what we are) is how it will affect the man who shot him. Will he fall to pieces over this and be unable to perform his function? This is what we're worried about first and foremost.

--Robert Ransom, Jr.  
*Letters from a  
Dead GI, April  
3, 1968*

Dear Mom and Dad,

The tracks were then returning us to where we would stay overnight. When we reached our spot we jumped off the tracks and one of my men jumped right on a mine. Both his feet were blown off, both legs were torn to shreds; his entire groin area was completely blown away. It was the most horrible sight I've ever seen. Fortunately he never knew what hit him. I tried to revive him with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation but it was hopeless to begin with....I said earlier that the incident changed me. I am now filled with both respect and hate for the VC and the Vietnamese. Respect because the enemy knows that he can't stand up to us in a fire fight, due to our superior training, equipment, and our vast arsenal of weapons. Yet he is able. Via his mines and booby traps, he can whittle our ranks down piece-meal until we cannot muster an effective fighting force. In the month that I have been with the company, we have lost four killed and about 30 wounded. We have not seen a single verified dink the whole time, nor have we even shot a single round at anything.

--Robert Ransom, Jr.  
*Letters from a  
Dead GI, April  
29, 1968*

Dear Susan,

You know what—this mine incident has changed me. I'm still opposed to the war on moral and political grounds as ever. But since I am here, and when I see the gory mess that mine made of my people, I want revenge. I want to kill every little slant-eyed bastard I see. I just wish to hell the VC would come out and fight. We never

see them, just their damn mines and booby traps. Do you know that in the month I've been with this company we've had over 30 people killed or wounded and we haven't see a dink or fired a single shot.

--Robert Ransom, Jr.  
*Letters from a  
Dead GI, May  
2, 1968*

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Ransom,

It is with great difficulty that I write this letter expressing my deepest sympathy over the loss of your son Robert—known as Mike to us. I have never written a letter like this before, but then, in my six years of nursing I have never met as courageous an individual as your son.

I was able to care for Mike daily and I want you to know that his sense of humor and will to live made my work much easier. Things he could no longer do for himself—like brushing his teeth—things that surely brought him discomfort—like turning him—brought only thank-yous, humorous remarks, a gleaming smile, or a twinkle from his eyes.

Mike fought hard, terribly hard, to overcome his body's wounded condition. But, strong as he was, his body could only endure so much. Mike was never afraid and although I'm sure he realized what was happening, he never, never lost his smile or his courage.

I guess I really wanted you to know that Mike did not die alone, with no one caring. I care, we all cared—we all share your sorrow.

Be ever so proud of Mike!

Most sincerely,

Connie Schlasser,  
CPT. ANC, 2nd  
Surgical  
Hospital, MA

Any nation is too immense and austere to articulate the emotional debt it owes to the service members it sends away and the families who must watch them go. The fallen veteran will be carried to the grave under our flag, and that flag will be presented to the family, as if it were equivalent to the life of one citizen.

--Benjamin Busch

When the line of violence has been crossed once, it's easier to cross again. Homicide and suicide differ greatly; but they are both forms of killing.

--Dr. David Spiegel

I wanted to know what were the experiences soldiers brought back from war that they couldn't share with society. As a journalist I have a mandate to talk about these things. But the soldiers, they don't. While killing is essential to the job, the conventional wisdom is that you don't speak about it.

--Kevin Sites

Boomers haven't made life perfect, the way we promised we would back in the 1960s. We promised we wouldn't fight any wars. We were fibbing—we've had seven or eight since Vietnam. However, we did make them smaller. The United States has suffered more than 5,800 combat deaths in the three decades of the post-Vietnam era. The number is painful, but it's also less—by almost a thousand—than the number of U.S. Servicemen who died in just five weeks during the Battle of Iwo Jima.

—P. J. O'Rourke

More than 70 million men were mobilized, of whom some 45 million became casualties, and at least 9 million died. On average, the [Great War] claimed the lives of 230 soldiers, sailors, or airmen for every hour that it lasted.

--Deborah Cohen

To die for one's country is such a worthy fate that all compete for so beautiful a death.

--Pierre Corneille

We always knew how to honor fallen soldiers. They were killed for our sake, they went out on our mission. But how are we to mourn a random man killed in a terrorist attack while sitting in a cafe? How do you mourn a housewife who got on a bus and never returned?

--A. B. Yehoshua

As Steven Pinker showed in the 2011 book *Better Angels of Our Nature*, total casualties of combat, including indirect casualties from the economic harm associated with fighting, have been declining, even as the global population has risen. In 1950, one person in 5,000 worldwide died owing to combat; by 2010, this measure was down to one person in 300,000. In recent years, far more people have been killed by car crashes than by battle.

—Gregg Easterbrook

Teens who spend three hours a day or more on electronic devices are 35 percent more likely to have a risk factor for suicide, such as making a suicide plan. (That's much more than the risk related to, say, watching TV.) One piece of data that indirectly but stunningly captures kids' growing isolation, for good and for bad: since 2007, the homicide rate among teens has declined, but the suicide rate has increased. As teens have started spending less time together, they have become less likely to kill one another, and more likely to kill themselves. In 2011, for the first time in 24 years, the teen suicide rate was higher than the teen homicide rate.

—Jean M. Twenge

Girls have borne the brunt of the rise in depressive symptoms among today's teens. Boys' depressive symptoms increased by 21 percent from 2012 to 2015, while the girls' increased by 50 percent — more than twice as much. The rise in suicide, too, is more pronounced among girls. Although the rate increased for both sexes, three times as many 12-to-14 year old girls killed themselves in 2015 as in 2007, compared with twice as many boys. The suicide rate is still higher for boys, in part because they use more-lethal methods, but girls are beginning to close the gap.

—Jean M. Twenge

Every conversation about gun deaths should begin by recognizing one blindingly clear fact about this problem—the United States is on its own planet. The gun death rate in the U.S. is 10 times that of other advanced industrial countries. Places such as Japan and South Korea have close to zero gun-related deaths in a year. The United States has around 30,000.

—Fareed Zakaria

States that have some of the highest percentages of gun ownership have some of the highest gun-related death rates (Alaska, Wyoming, Montana, Arkansas), and those with some of the lowest rates of gun ownership generally have the lowest gun-related death rates (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island).

—Fareed Zakaria

Connecticut passed a law in 1995 that made it harder to buy guns. In the following decade, the gun-related homicide rate was 40 percent lower than projected had the law not been passed, according to Johns Hopkins researchers. On the other hand, Missouri in 2007 made it much easier to buy a gun. Over the next five years, the gun-related homicide rate was 25 percent higher than projected.

—Fareed Zakaria

The fact of killing animals is not as frightening as our human tendency to justify it—to kill and not even be aware that we are taking life. It is sobering to realize that when you misuse one of the least of Nature's creatures, like the chicken, you are sowing the seeds for misusing the highest of Nature's creatures, man.

--Dick Gregory

When I was twelve, I went hunting with my father and we shot a bird. He was laying there and something struck me. Why do we call this fun to kill this creature who was as happy as I was when I woke up this morning.

—Marv Levy

We lose eight children and teenagers to gun violence every day. If a mysterious virus suddenly started killing eight of our children every day, America would mobilize teams of doctors and public health officials. We would move heaven and earth until we found a way to protect our children. But not with gun violence.

--Elizabeth Warren

So long as you have a society with a lot of guns—and America has more guns per capita than any other county in the world—children will be at risk of being shot. The questions are how much risk, and what, if anything, is being done to minimize it? If one thinks of various ways in which commonplace items, from car seats to medicine bottle tops, have been childproofed, it's clear that society's general desire has been to eliminate as many potential dangers from children as possible, even when the number of those who might be harmed is relatively small. If one child's death is preventable, then the proper question isn't 'Why should we do this' but rather 'Why shouldn't we?' It would be strange for that principle to apply to everything but guns.

--Gary Younge

Birth and death are not two different states, but they are different aspects of the same state. There is as little reason to deplore the one as there is to be pleased over the other.

—Mahatma Gandhi

It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees!

--Emiliano Zapata

He who rejoices at the destruction of human life is not fit to be entrusted with power in the world.

--Lao-Tse

I do like to see the arms and legs fly.

--Colonel George S.  
Patton

Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die.

—Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Patriots always talk of dying for their country and never of killing for their country.

—Bertrand Russell

Those who love deeply never grow old; they may die of old age, but they die young.

--Arthur Wing Pinero

If you live to be a hundred, I want to live to be a hundred minus one day so I never have to live without you.

--A. A. Milne

October is Nature's funeral month. Nature glories in death more than in life. The month of departure is more beautiful than the month of coming—October than May. Every green thing loves to die in bright colors.

—Henry Ward Beecher

Simple math suggests that roughly one out of every two of us will suffer the loss of our spouse, our life partner. This reality is all but assured. And yet, most of us arrive at that point unprepared for such grief.

—*Daily Herald* Editorial

...a vast emptiness that fills your heart and lungs and restricts your ability to think or even breathe....It felt like the grief would never subside. The waves would continue to crash over me until I was no longer standing, no longer myself.

—Sheryl Sandberg

It's not as if the leaves are doing anything miraculous....Cold weather stops photosynthesis, and the leaves die. All that bright color is a death shroud.

--Raina Kelley

You can't tell how good it is to be alive, till you are facing death, because you don't live till then.

--John Galsworthy

It must be terrible to bury someone you love in early May... Or in September... Or at Christmas. It must be terrible at Christmas. February is a suitable month for dying. Everything around is dead, the trees black and frozen so that the appearance of green shoots two months hence seems preposterous, the ground hard and cold, the snow dirty, the winter hateful, hanging on too long.

—Anna Quindlen

Life without a friend is death without a witness.

--Spanish Proverb

What then is tragedy? In the Elizabethan period it was assumed that a play ending in death was a tragedy, but in recent years we have come to understand that to live on is sometimes far more tragic than death.

—George P. Baker

Nothing seems so tragic to one who is old as the death of one who is young, and this alone proves that life is a good thing.

--Zoe Akins

Life is the totality of those functions which resist death.

--Marie Francois Xavier  
Bichat

You don't get to choose how you're going to die. Or when. You can only decide how you're going to live. Now.

--Joan Baez

Living is misfortune, death a kindness.

--Giacomo Leopardi

Comfort zones are plush lined coffins. When you stay in your plush lined coffins, you die.

—Stan Dale

For death is not the worst, but when one wants to die and is not able even to have that.

—Sophocles

The comfortable estate of widowhood, is the only hope that keeps up a wife's spirits.

--John Gay

Celibate, like the fly in the heart of an apple, dwells in a perpetual sweetness, but sits alone, and is confined and dies in singularity.

--Jeremy Taylor

I'm not upset about my divorce. I'm only upset that I'm not a widow.

—Roseanne Barr

Married men live longer than single men. But married men are a lot more willing to die.

--Johnny Carson

My mother buried three husbands—and two of them were only napping.

—Rita Rudner

You are looking for a rich husband. At your age I looked for hardship, danger, horror and death, that I might feel the life in me more intensely. I did not let the fear of death govern my life; and my reward was, I had my life. You are going to let the fear of poverty govern your life and your reward will be that you will eat, but you will not live.

--George Bernard Shaw

'Why'd you want to kill yourself? Didn't you feel anything, or didn't it hurt you?' Mandy questioned, looking puzzled.

'Yes, I suppose it did, ... it was strange, it was sharp, that's all I can think of to describe it... and cold, but not cold like ice, more like... I don't know, like something much worse, something horrible... and it seemed like the ground was falling upwards, becoming the sky... for a moment it made me consider that it was just a dream, that I was on some sort of drug, and then I remember being overjoyed to see the sky was still above me, then just really sad, really tired... and then I don't remember much else about it,' Alecto told her, glaring straight ahead at the sky with narrowed eyes. 'I don't mind, I'm not supposed to mind, anyway. Mearth already told me that eventually I would want to be dead, that it was inevitable... still, I sometimes wish that I could have done something good for other people in my life, it might have made up for all the bad stuff I've done.'

--Rebecca McNutt

The only religious way to think of death is as part and parcel of life.

—Thomas Mann

It is a sad fact that 50 percent of marriages in this country end in divorce. But hey, the other half end in death. You could be one of the lucky ones!

--Richard Jeni

Why do most men die before their wives? They want to.

--Unknown

A burial plot is literally the last thing you need.

—*theChive*

The leading cause of death among fashion models is falling through street grates.

--Dave Barry

The fatality rate for suicide attempts overall is around 9%; but where a firearm is used, that rises to 85%.

—Peter Aldhous

Buy me a drink,  
Sing me a song,  
Take me as I come  
'cause I can't stay long.

—Tom Petty

We thought of you with love today  
but that is nothing new.  
We thought about you yesterday  
and days before that too.  
We think of you in silence.  
We often speak your name.  
All we have are memories  
and a picture in a frame.  
Your memories are our keepsake  
with which we'll never part.  
God has you in his keeping.  
We have you in our hearts.  
It broke our heart to lose you.  
but you didn't go alone,  
For a part of us went with you...  
the day God took you home.

—Unknown

No matter how much you think you love somebody, you'll step back when the pool of their blood edges up too close.

—Chuck Palahniuk

It is only when we become conscious of our part in life, however modest, that we shall be happy. Only then will we be able to live in peace and die in peace, for only this lends meaning to life and to death.

--Antoine de  
Saint-Exupery

Let no man be called happy before his death. Till then, he is not happy, only lucky.

—Solon

Hard work never killed a man. Men die of boredom, psychological conflict and disease. Indeed the harder your people work, the happier and healthier they will be.

--David Ogilvy

The human life cycle no less than evolves around the box; from the open-topped box called a bassinet, to the pine box we call a coffin, the box is our past and, just as assuredly, our future.

--Richard Paul Evans

American family life has never been particularly idyllic. In the nineteenth century, nearly a quarter of all children experienced the death of one of their parents....Not until the sixties did the chief cause of separation of parents shift from death to divorce.

--Richard Louv

He was a simple honest man. He never strayed,  
He never drank, he never smoked, and he never kissed a maid.  
And when he passed away his insurance was denied,  
Because he never lived, they claimed he never died.

--Ted Gup

We seldom see the bones of pain that hang beyond the green summer day. The woods and fields and gardens are places of endless stabbing, impaling, squashing and mangling. We see only what floats to the surface: the colour, the song, the nesting, and the feeding. I do not think we could bear a clear vision of the animal world.

--J. A. Baker

A sad soul can kill you quicker than a germ.

—John Steinbeck

Few wild animals—regardless of species—ever live out their full life-spans; a violent death almost always intervenes.

--Allan W. Eckert

Nature has no compassion. Nature accepts no excuses and the only punishment it knows is death.

--Eric Hoffer

Though boys throw stones at frogs in sport, the frogs do not die in sport, but in earnest.

—Bion of Borysthenes

Death is really a great blessing for humanity, without it there could be no real progress. People who lived for ever would not only hamper and discourage the young, but they would themselves lack sufficient stimulus to be creative.

—Alfred Adler

In those days the sound of those midnight chimes, though it seemed to raise hilarity in all around me, never failed to bring a train of pensive imagery into my fancy. Yet I then scarce conceived what it meant, or thought of it as a reckoning that concerned me. Not childhood alone, but the young man till thirty, never feels practically that he is mortal. He knows it indeed, and, if need were, he could preach a homily on the fragility of life; but he brings it not home to himself, any more than in a hot June we can appropriate to our imagination the freezing days of December. But now—shall I confess a truth?—I feel these audits but too powerfully. I begin to count the probabilities of my duration; and to grudge at the expenditure of moments and shortest periods, like miser's farthings. In proportion as the years both lessen and shorten, I set more count upon their periods; and would fain lay my ineffectual finger upon the spoke of the great wheel.... I care not to be carried with the tide, that smoothly bears human life to eternity; and reluct at the inevitable course of destiny. I am in love with this green earth; the face of town and country; the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security of streets. I would set up my tabernacle here. I am content to stand still at the age to which I am arrived; I, and my friends. To be no younger, no richer, no handsomer. I do not want to be weaned by age; or drop, like mellow fruit, as they say, into the grave.— Any alteration, on this earth of mine, in diet, or in lodging, puzzles and discomposes me. My household gods plant a terrible fixed foot, and are not rooted up without blood....

Sun, and sky, and breeze, and solitary walks, and summer holydays, and the greenness of fields, and the delicious juices of meats and fishes, and society, and the

cheerful glass, and candle-light, and fireside conversations, and innocent vanities, and jests, and irony itself—do these things go out with life?

Can a ghost laugh; or shake his gaunt sides, when you are pleasant with him?...

In winter this intolerable disinclination to dying—to give it its mildest name—does more especially haunt and beset me....

Whatsoever thwarts, or puts me out of my way, brings death into my mind.... I have heard some profess an indifference to life. Such hail the end of their existence as a port of refuge; and speak of the grave as of some soft arms, in which they may slumber as on a pillow....

Those antidotes, prescribed against the fear of thee, are altogether frigid and insulting, like thyself.... In the meantime I am alive.... I survive, a jolly candidate for 1821. Another cup of wine—and... that turn-coat bell... just now mournfully chanted the obsequies of 1820 departed, [and] with changed notes lustily rings in a successor...

—Charles Lamb

It is well. I die hard but am not afraid to go.

—George Washington

No one worries about you like your mother, and when she is gone, the world seems unsafe, things that happen unwieldy. You cannot turn to her anymore, and it changes your life forever. There is no one on earth who knew you from the day you were born; who knew why you cried, or when you'd had enough food; who knew exactly what to say when you were hurting; and who encouraged you to grow a good heart. When that layer goes, whatever is left of your childhood goes with her.

—Adriana Trigiani

If silence is ever golden, it must be here beside the graves of fifteen thousand men, whose lives were more significant than speech, and whose death was a poem, the music of which can never be sung.

--James Garfield

Here on this peaceful hillside, the silent rows of headstones tell tales of service and sacrifice that are so much the story of our nation. Here lies the spirit that has guided our country for more than 200 years now. Nurses and drummer boys, scouts and engineers, warriors and peacemakers -- joined by a shared devotion to defend our nation, protect our freedom, keep America strong and proud.

—Bill Clinton

And thus I take my leave of the world and of you all, and I heartily desire you all to pray for me.

—Anne Boleyn

On this day, we must tell the stories of those who fought and died in freedom's cause. We must tell their stories because those who've lost loved ones need to know that a grateful Nation will always remember. We must tell their stories so that our children and grandchildren will understand what our lives might have been like had it not been for their sacrifice.

—George H. W. Bush

A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself.

—Joseph Campbell

All my life as an artist I have asked myself: What pushes me continually to make sculpture? I have found the answer. art is an action against death. It is a denial of death.

—Jacques Lipchitz

A death certificate is the last participation trophy you'll ever receive.

—Internet Meme

The average funeral costs \$7,000—\$10,000. I can't even afford to die.

—Internet Meme

Here is a sobering fact: The number of Americans who died from gunshot wounds in the last decade — more than 300,000 —exceeds the nation's total combat fatalities in World War II.

Gun deaths in the U.S. today are almost as frequent as deaths from traffic accidents. Yet the United States isn't an especially violent country, judged by statistics on general assaults. It's the rate of gun deaths, specifically, that outstrips that of any other developed nation.

—Peter Aldhous

The thought of just how inadequate the body's natural defenses —skull, bone, brain—were in the face of the advanced physics—lead, gun-powder, momentum—of invented death. It all seemed so absurd to him: that a life comprising so many accumulated years could be interrupted with such indifferent swiftness.

--Adam Sternbergh

Homicide through gun violence is the leading cause of death among young African American males in the United States. If people look a certain way, they have a higher tendency of dying, of having their lives taken away.

--Ryan Coogler

Gun violence is real. People don't come back.

--Stevie Wonder

Yes, people pull the trigger but guns are the instrument of death. Gun control is necessary, and delay means more death and horror.

—Eliot Spitzer

In an average month, 50 women are shot to death by intimate partners in the U.S. And more than half of all women killed by intimate partners in the U.S. are killed with guns.

—*everytownresearch.org*.  
(2015)

Black men are 14 times more likely than non-hispanic white men to be shot and killed with guns.

Black Americans make up 14 percent of the U.S. population but are victims of more than half of all gun homicides.

—*everytownresearch.org*.  
(2015)

Donning guerrilla fatigues and camouflage to complete his 'mission,' the former Army man ambushed Keiba in the parking lot of their apartment complex. She was his fiancée and the mother of his son. He had never acted violently toward her prior to this incident.

Martha, a student at the University of South Carolina, was paralyzed when a gang member fired his gun as she and her friends were waiting for a taxi.

Jasbir was cooking for the congregation at a Sikh temple when a white supremacist and Army veteran entered the temple and opened fire. Six people were killed and four were injured. The shooter killed himself after shooting at a police officer on the scene.

Antonius was struck by a random bullet as he walked down a crowded Brooklyn street. The intended target was the ex-girlfriend of the shooter.

Megan was shot through the pelvis with an AK-47. Stopping to drop someone off, the car she was riding in was besieged by a hail of bullets. She lay on top of a toddler, who was also in the car, to protect the child. Megan now walks with a limp. A gang initiation is believed to be the motive.

—Sarah Jacobs

Terrifying mass shooting and high-profile officer-involved incidents have dominated the national conversation on gun violence in recent years. But most deaths by gun are not headline-grabbing massacres. They're more private, more intimate, and perhaps in that way, even more horrifying. Domestic violence, make no mistake, domestic violence is a gun issue.

--Melissa Harris-Perry

Daniel Mauser, 15.

April 20, 1999 started off like any regular school day at Columbine High School in a small town in Colorado.

Students attended classes, talked with each other in the hallways and went about their usual business, including Daniel, an active member on the school's debate team.

That all changed when two students, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, walked into the library and opened fire into a crowd of their peers. The scene in library could be described as nothing short of a war zone with students climbing under and over desks and tables to avoid the bullets. Students cried out in fear for their lives as the killers moved through the room taunting and shooting at them.

When the shooting spree ended, Daniel and 12 other people were dead, and 24 were injured.

The killers bought three of the four weapons they used through a straw purchaser at a gun show where background checks are not required prior to purchase. The straw purchaser, Robyn Anderson, purchased guns from an unlicensed seller. The three weapons Anderson bought included a semiautomatic assault rifle and two shotguns.

The killers also had an assault pistol, also purchased at a gun show. Anderson later testified that she would not have bought the weapons if the unlicensed seller had required she go through a background check.

—*bradycampaign.org*

Jitka Vesel, 36.

On the evening of April 13, 2011, Jitka was volunteering at a small museum in a quiet Chicago suburb. She loved being part of the museum's close community, and the community adored her.

Jitka was alone in the museum parking lot when Dmitry Smirnov, a man who was obsessed with her, ambushed her with a .40-caliber handgun.

Dmitry lived in Vancouver, British Columbia. Unbeknownst to Jitka, he had been in town for two weeks and was stalking her. He had come to kill her.

Smirnov couldn't legally buy a handgun, so he exploited a gaping hole in our gun laws that allowed him to go online and buy gun without first having to pass a background check. He logged on to Armslist.com, found a .40-caliber Smith & Wesson,

and arranged a meeting in a casino parking lot with Benedict Ladera, an unlicensed seller who had posted over 20 guns for sale on Armslist.

As Ladera was not a licensed gun seller, he did not conduct a Brady background check on his customers. If one had been performed, it would have probably taken less than 60 seconds. And Smirnov—a Canadian national—would not have been able to purchase the gun.

Benedict Ladera knew it was illegal to sell his gun to Jitka's killer. But for an extra \$200 cash, he agreed to look the other way. During sentencing, he would later tell the court, 'I didn't mean for it to happen. My mistake was the reason a life was lost.'

—*bradycampaign.org*

Ricky Byrdsong, 43.

Friday, July 2, 1999 began what promised to be a beautiful holiday weekend in the idyllic town of Skokie, Illinois. Unfortunately, that was the day 21-year-old white supremacist Benjamin Nathaniel Smith began a three-day, two-state killing spree, targeting African-Americans, Jews and Asians—who he viewed as 'Mud People,' according to the demented, racist 'Church' that he followed.

Smith's carefully planned acts of violence all depended on his access to weaponry. At first, he didn't have much luck. He tried to buy two handguns and a shotgun from a licensed dealer but through the Brady law-mandated background check, it was discovered that he was prohibited, as Smith's ex-girlfriend had taken out a protection order on him. The dealer turned Smith away without a gun.

But Smith was able to turn to classified ads in the local paper, where he found Donald R. Fiessinger, an unlicensed seller in central Illinois who was willing to sell him two pistols with no background check.

Armed with two guns and fueled by racial hatred, Smith began his rampage by wounding nine Orthodox Jews in drive-by shootings in the West Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago. He then drove to the Byrdsong family's Skokie neighborhood.

'About a block from our house, I saw a blue car turn,' remembers Kelley Byrdsong, then only ten years old. Kelley was on her bicycle . . . her brother, Ricky Jr., was on his skateboard. Her father—an athletic man who was the former head basketball coach at Northwestern University—was jogging alongside.

Then Benjamin Nathaniel Smith began shooting from the window of his Ford Taurus.

Just three blocks from his home, Byrdsong fell to the ground—shot in the back in front of his children. He died four hours later on the operating table at Evanston Hospital.

His assassin was just getting started. He shot an African-American minister, an Asian-American graduate student, and killed Won-Joon Yoon, a 26 year-old Korean doctoral student walking to church on his Indiana University campus. By the end of

a weekend that would culminate in his own suicide, Smith left two dead—along with eight wounded.

‘Why do we continue to allow this to go on?’ asked Ricky’s widow, Sherialyn Byrdsong, Ricky’s widow, who now speaks out regularly against gun violence and for background checks on all gun sales. ‘If the powers that be really wanted to stop the access to guns that are out there for anyone to get, they could.’

—*bradycampaign.org*

Markie, 3

One June day, I left work a little later than expected. This made me a few minutes late to pick up my 3-year-old son from his regular babysitter’s house outside St. Louis.

It was during those minutes that the babysitter’s 11-year-old child found a gun in a closet. Markie, my son, entered the room, surprising the boy with the gun. The gun went off. He never meant to shoot Markie.

Today, I tell all parents to ask a simple question that can help prevent unintentional shootings like the one that has changed my life:

‘Is there an unlocked gun in the homes where my child plays?’

There’s no way to describe the pain of losing a child and the effects of Markie’s death – not just on my family, but also on the family of the boy who shot my son.

My hope is to prevent other families from feeling the same pain and heartache.

That is why I support the ASKing Saves Kids Campaign. The campaign encourages parents to ask about guns in the home before sending their children over to play.

Parenting is a constant juggling act, and we can always share extra tips and information to help keep our children safe.

And while I know many parents might find it hard to start this conversation, it’s a conversation that can save lives.

I encourage you to pledge to ASK, and to make sure your friends and neighbors do too.

—*bradycampaign.org*

Emily, 21

Emily Elizabeth Marks. That was my youngest child’s name. You can read it silently or say it out loud, but please do not forget her name.

Emily was born on August 23rd, 1991. She had her father’s brown eyes and his bright, optimistic smile. From me she got her quirky sense of humor and a total inability to understand cruelty of any kind.

I, like most mothers, believed that all three of my children were special. They were gifted and bright—never average. In each of their own ways they were just that, special.

We made the move out to the suburbs when Emily was two. I found a house on a nice, quiet street. It had a big yard, separate bedrooms for each child, and good schools. Most of all though, it was safe. An idyllic home set far away from the dangers of the big city, or so I thought.

For many years that house was a happy place. My children seemed to thrive there. During Christmas the entire street glowed and Halloween was always an event. Countless costumed kids crossed our door step each year.

Emily, bright and beautiful, danced and laughed through her childhood. She was my happy, silly little sprite.

Like most, her teenage years were a roller coaster. She made friends and lost them. She was disorganized, messy, silly, kind and always smiling. She gained weight and she lost it. Her hair went from blond, to black, to pink, to green and back to blond again. She was a nonconformist—listening to different music and wearing different clothes than everyone else.

I was proud of her. But slowly the darkness began to creep in. She spent more time in her room with her computer, reading. When Emily emerged she was sometimes solemn one minute, then giggling the next. I chalked it up to adolescence. This too would pass.

She went to college, made friends, got a new boyfriend, told us how great life was, and flunked all of her classes.

Emily soon moved to Philadelphia with her beloved boyfriend, Ben. It was there that she tried to take her life for the first time. When we arrived at the hospital she was a mess—unkempt, quiet, and distant. She told the doctors that she didn't mean it, that she was embarrassed and would never do it again. She was released and came home.

Back in Pittsburgh she saw a psychiatrist and a therapist whilst on medication. It seemed to work. The darkness rolled back and turned to twilight. Emily was safe at home.

I never knew where my husband kept his guns. We never talked about them. He is a kind and gentle man who would sometimes go target shooting with his buddies. It was a guy thing.

The morning of April 27th, 2012 was like any other; I awoke for work early and got ready for the day. Emily came downstairs to see me off. She was finishing her first semester at a local college and cramming for finals. We were in the midst of planning a trip to Philadelphia to visit my older daughter and, of course, Ben.

Emily scooped up our new puppy and, with a crooked, introspective smile, wished me goodbye.

When I returned home from work I found her in that big backyard. She looked like a pile of rags. She was wearing one shoe, her favorite jeans, and an old sweater. I remember the stillness and the smell of the blood. I called 911, knowing it was too late.

The police found the gun beside her. When they told me Emily had shot herself I could not believe it; there had to be a mistake.

She didn't even know how to use a gun—her father's was always locked away. This was a nice house in the suburbs. We did not use guns here.

In her room we found her books laid out on her bed, along with her neat class notes and laptop.

The search history on Emily's computer revealed that at three in the morning she had been researching how to use a gun for suicide. There on the web she found step by step instructions. The sites told her how to fire the gun and where to place it to ensure a fatal shot. They even showed her what someone looks like after they have shot themselves in the head.

She had left no suicide note. There was no message of how horrible her life had been or that the world would be better off without her.

Instead I found, on the last page of a notebook and in Emily's neat handwriting, these words:

'A star is born, it grows and when it dies it becomes energy pure white light'.

This was my bright Emily, who could find beauty in the depths of darkness. Please do not forget her name.

—*bradycampaign.org*

One only wishes Wayne LaPierre and his NRA board of directors could be drafted to some of these scenes, where they would be required to put on booties and rubber gloves and help clean up the blood, the brains, and the chunks of intestine still containing the poor wads of half-digested food that were some innocent bystander's last meal.

--Stephen King

When my mother died, I was 57, highly successful and content, but when I would take time to grieve, I was like a 9-year-old sobbing. I really didn't know how I could go on without her. All my philosophical and religious thoughts went out the window. Death is so intensely real. When someone close to you dies, it shines a light on life's basics: love, family, relationships, what's important. And what is important? Do the right thing in this moment, and be happy, healthy, joyful. That's about it. Be kind and the rest will take care of itself.

—Ted Danson

To retire is the beginning of death.

--Pablo Casals

Death is the next step after the pension—it's perpetual retirement without pay.

--Jean Giraudoux

Sooner or later I'm going to die, but I'm not going to retire.

--Margaret Mead

No one ever dies of hard work, but a lot of people die once they retire from an active job.

--Sir Ian MacGregor

Retirement is death itself.

--Lucille Ball

Life: It's like a box of chocolates. It has an expiration date.

—Internet Meme

It's of great importance to have at least one friend who is in worse shape than you are.

--Bruce Jay Friedman

Limit contact with a friend who greets you with a yawn and says: 'It won't be long now, right fella?'

--Bruce Jay Friedman

Here is a simple truth that many of us seem to resist: living too long is also a loss. It renders many of us, if not disabled, then faltering and declining, a state that may not be worse than death but is nonetheless deprived. It robs us of our creativity and ability to contribute to work, society, the world. It transforms how people experience us, relate to us, and, most important, remember us. We are no longer remembered as vibrant and engaged but as feeble, ineffectual, even pathetic.

—Ezekiel J. Emanuel

When I was younger I hated going to weddings. It seemed that all of my aunts and the grandmotherly types used to come up to me, poking me in the ribs and cackling, telling me, 'You're next.'

They stopped that shit after I started doing the same thing to them at funerals.

—*Jokes of the Day*

I fear vastly more a futile, incompetent old age than I do any form of death.

—William Allen White

The failure of the mind in old age is often less the result of natural decay, than of disuse. Ambition has ceased to operate; contentment brings indolence, and indolence decay of mental power, ennui, and sometimes death. Men have been known to die, literally speaking, of disease induced by intellectual vacancy.

—Sir B. Brodie

I despise the kind of existence that clings to the miserly trifles of comfort and self-interest. I think that a man should not live beyond the age when he begins to deteriorate, when the flame the lighted the brightest moment of his life has weakened.

—Fidel Castro

I learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you miss them terribly after they die.

—*seniorresource.com*

The hands of every clock are shears, trimming us away scrap by scrap, and every time piece with a digital readout blinks us towards implosion.

—Dean Koontz

To grow old is to have taken away, one by one, all gifts of life, the food and wine, the music and the company....The gods unloose, one by one, the mortal fingers that cling to the edge of the table.

—Storm Jameson

## **THE NAKED HEART**

From womb to tomb,  
There came and went -  
Only you.  
Poor or rich,  
You will die with  
Only you.  
All the wealth you harvest  
In the living,  
Will go to others when you are dead.  
But the true test of a lion of God -  
Is to keep giving with your own hands,  
Before you rest in your final bed.

--Suzy Kassem

Cosmic upheaval is not so moving as a little child pondering the death of a sparrow in the corner of a barn.

--Anouk Aimee

He who doesn't fear death dies only once.

—Giovanni Falcone

The grim reaper smiles in his sleeve as he takes his daily toll from humanity's stupidity and carelessness.

--Ernest Greenwood

Anyone who has ever looked into the glazed eyes of a soldier dying on the battlefield will think hard before starting a war.

—Otto von Bismarck

'The baby cried,' recounted another woman, remembering a radio operator in her unit who was forced to silence her hungry newborn as they hid from the Germans. 'If the dogs heard it, we'd all be killed...She lowers the swaddled baby into the water and holds it there for a long time...The baby doesn't cry anymore.

—Svetlana Alexievich

We didn't shoot [prisoners], that was too easy a death for them; we struck them with ramrods like pigs, we cut them to pieces. I went to look at it...I waited, for a long time for the moment when their eyes would begin to burst from pain.

—Unknown Soviet WWII  
Soldier

They went with songs to the battle, they were young.  
Straight of limb, true of eyes, steady and aglow.  
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,  
They fell with their faces to the foe.  
They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
We will remember them.

—Laurence Binyon

## THE YOUNG DEAD

Ah, how I pity the young dead who gave  
All that they were, and might become, that we  
With tired eyes should watch this perfect sea  
Re-weave its patterning of silver wave  
Round scented cliffs of arbutus and bay.

No more shall any rose along the way,  
The myrtled way that wanders to the shore,  
Nor jonquil-twinkling meadow any more,  
Nor the warm lavender that takes the spray,  
Smell only of sea-salt and the sun.

But, through recurring seasons, every one  
Shall speak to us with lips the darkness closes,  
Shall look at us with eyes that missed the roses,  
Clutch us with hands whose work was just begun,  
Laid idle now beneath the earth we tread—

And always we shall walk with the young dead.—  
Ah, how I pity the young dead, whose eyes  
Strain through the sod to see these perfect skies,  
Who feel the new wheat springing in their stead,  
And the lark singing for them overhead!

—Edith Wharton

For love of country they accepted death...

—James A. Garfield

There's a graveyard in northern France where all the dead boys from D-Day are buried. The white crosses reach from one horizon to the other. I remember looking it over and thinking it was a forest of graves. But the rows were like this, dizzying, diagonal, perfectly straight, so after all it wasn't a forest but an orchard of graves. Nothing to do with nature, unless you count human nature.

--Barbara Kingsolver

Life is not lost by dying; life is lost minute by minute, day by dragging day, in all the thousand small uncaring ways.

—Stephen Vincent Benet

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,  
If you want me again look for me under your bootsoles.

—Walt Whitman

There are only three things that can kill a farmer: lightning, rolling over in a tractor, and old age.

--Bill Bryson

One realizes the immortality of true love only after the lover dies.

--Kanza Javed

I don't fear death—I fear dying before I've read Dickens end to end.

--Amy Smith

Writing, painting, singing—it cannot stop everything. Cannot halt death in its tracks. But perhaps it can make the pause between death's footsteps sound and look and feel beautiful, can make the space of waiting a place where you can linger without as much fear. For we are all walking each other to our deaths, and the journey there between footsteps makes up our lives.

--Ally Condie

Every thought about death takes a moment of life away.

--Dejan Stojanovic

We can lessen our fear of dying by living a regret-free life, meditating on our effect on subsequent generations, and confiding in loved ones about our death anxiety.

—Jordan Michael Smith

If we live a life full of regret, full of things we haven't done, if we've lived an unfulfilled life, when death comes along, it's a lot worse.

—Irvin Yalom

As I draw closer and closer to the end, I travel in the circle, nearer and nearer to the beginning.

—Charles Dickens

Anxiety about death is soothed somewhat by the belief that what follows life will be the same as what preceded it.

—Irvin Yalom

Dying is lonely, the loneliest event of life.

—Irvin Yalom

Patients diagnosed with untreatable cancer...were sometimes heartened by the idea that, by dying with dignity, they could be an example to others.

—Jordan Michael Smith

American lives are shorter on average than those in other wealthy nations and the gap is growing ever wider, according to the latest data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention....In 2016, U.S. life expectancy dropped for the second year in a row, a statistical event that hasn't happened since the early 1960s....Americans are dying younger, in part, because of deliberate policy choices we've made over the decades: rejecting single-payer health care. Cutting taxes for the rich. Shunning universal basic income. Abandoning universal child care. Those choices increasingly set us apart from the rest of the wealthy world.

—Christopher Ingraham

Suicide doesn't take away the pain; it gives it to someone else.

—Internet Meme

The air was rushing past her, sucked into her lungs and blurted out again in great heaving sobs that filled her throat with retching, choking pain. Then the pain burst outwards from her and she was howling through the rush of wind, howling like an animal in the unbearable pain and desolation of understanding at last that her father was dead.

—Mollie Hunter

Do any of you here think it's a crime to help a suffering human end his agony?

—Jack Kevorkian

My own taste in novel reading is one which I am prepared in a rather especial manner, not only to declare, but to defend. My taste is for the sensational novel, the detective story, the story about death, robbery and secret societies; a taste which I share in common with the bulk at least of the male population of this world. There was a time in my own melodramatic boyhood when I became quite fastidious in this respect. I would look at the first chapter of any new novel as a final test of its merits. If there was a murdered man under the sofa in the first chapter, I read the story. If there was no murdered man under the sofa in the first chapter, I dismissed the story as tea-table twaddle, which it often really was. But we all lose a little of that fine edge of austerity and idealism which sharpened our spiritual standard in our youth. I have come to compromise with the tea-table and to be less insistent about the sofa. As long as a corpse or two turns up in the second, the third, nay even

the fourth or fifth chapter, I make allowance for human weakness, and I ask no more. But a novel without any death in it is still to me a novel without any life in it. I admit that the very best of the tea-table novels are great art—for instance, *Emma* or *Northanger Abbey*. Sheer elemental genius can make a work of art out of anything. Michelangelo might make a statue out of mud, and Jane Austen could make a novel out of tea—that much more contemptible substance. But on the whole I think that a tale about one man killing another man is more likely to have something in it than a tale in which, all the characters are talking trivialities without any of that instant and silent presence of death which is one of the strong spiritual bonds of all mankind. I still prefer the novel in which one person does another person to death to the novel in which all the persons are feebly (and vainly) trying to get the others to come to life.

—G. K. Chesterton

Dead parents are gruesome, yes, but anyone who's anyone in children's literature has either been orphaned or abandoned; well-adjusted kids from stable two-parent homes don't go on hero quests.

--Lynn Messina

I don't fear death—I fear dying before I've read Dickens end to end.

--Amy Smith

I realized the amazing power of literature and of the human imagination generally: to make the dead live and to stop the living from dying.

—Ivan Klima

To grieve is something extremely difficult, we don't even know how to begin to grieve, and I don't know how you can be taught to grieve.

—Charlotte Rampling

Love begins with a smile, grows with a kiss, ends with a tear. When you were born, you were crying and everyone around you was smiling. Live your life so that when you die, you're the one smiling and everyone around you is crying.

—*boardofwisdom.com*

Laura had been diagnosed with cystic fibrosis years before, and now, after medical interventions, including a double lung transplant, it was apparent she wouldn't make it. She made her peace with it and shared that peace and for weeks was visited by the people she loved most, and who loved her. And the experience of her death at the age of 22 was thus somehow touched with joy.

—Jeff Macgregor

The Aztecs would take prisoners, then fatten them up and later sacrifice them to their sun god by tearing out the heart. The corpse would be tumbled down the stairs of the pyramid on which the sacrifice took place.

The body would not go to waste. At least three of the limbs would go to the captor (whoever captured the prisoner on the battlefield), and would be served at a feast at their property in a stew. The head would be removed and put on display by the temple, and the torso would be given to the zoo and fed to carnivorous animals.

—Natalya Lobanova

Before the introduction of Christianity, the people of Fiji would strangle the widows of recently deceased men.

It was believed that only married people could enter the afterlife, and that wives must accompany their husbands as proof of their marriage. Often, the women were ready and willing in this ritual, partially because they knew if they weren't, they would be ostracized from their community. They would often build their own tombs, more out of fear of the surviving community than necessarily love for their deceased husbands. If a wife died, however, the husband did not have to be killed – his beard being shaved off and placed under her armpit was apparently sufficient evidence of marriage in the afterlife.

—Natalya Lobanova

Vestal Virgins were sacred in Ancient Rome—they were priestesses of the goddess Vesta, and their chastity was seen as being directly linked with the health of Rome. If a Vestal Virgin had sex, this would be treated as an act of treason and her punishment would be to be buried alive. The Vestal Virgins were chosen to join the priesthood well before puberty, and then swore an oath of celibacy for 30 years. They were seen as pure and holy, and the punishment for hurting one was death. Which is why, when a vestal was sentenced to death, the only appropriate method of execution was burying her alive, as that would not spill her blood. It was also illegal for anyone to be buried alive within the confines of the city, so the priestess would be put into an underground room with enough food and water for a few days, so that she wasn't technically being buried alive.

—Natalya Lobanova

I love eulogies. They are the most moving kind of speech because they attempt to pluck meaning from the fog, and on short order, when the emotions are still ragged and raw and susceptible to leaps.

—Peggy Noonan

A hundred years from now? All new people.

—Anne Lamott

Researchers found that the risk of suicide for veterans is 21 percent higher when compared to civilian adults. From 2001 to 2014, as the civilian suicide rate rose about 23.3 percent, the rate of suicide among veterans jumped more than 32 percent.

The problem is particularly worrisome among female veterans, who saw their suicide rates rise more than 85 percent over that time, compared to about 40 percent for civilian women.

And roughly 65 percent of all veterans suicides in 2014 were for individuals 50 years or older, many of whom spent little or no time fighting in the most recent wars.

—Jeff Macgregor

Edna Woolman Chase, the editor of *Vogue*...insisted that employees appear for work in hats, white gloves, and black silk stockings....Idleness, and that included personal conversations during business hours, was forbidden. Her standards for conduct were rigorous. When an editor once tried to kill herself by diving in front of a subway train, Edna Chase was pained by her vulgarity. If a *Vogue* editor was forced to resort to suicide, she should have enough sense to swallow sleeping powders instead of leaving messes for the city sanitation department.

—Marion Meade

I certainly don't feel seventy—I feel ninety. If I had any decency, I would be dead because most of my friends are.

—Dorothy Parker

A man interrupted a match-deciding putt on the eighteenth green, to stand respectfully, hat in hand, while a funeral cortège rumbled by on the road behind him. Then he sank his putt. 'Congratulations,' said his opponent grudgingly. 'It took iron nerve not to let that funeral procession fluster you into missing your putt!'

'It wasn't easy,' admitted the victor. 'On Saturday we would've been married twenty-five years!'

—Bennett Cerf

When I die, want to be thoroughly used up. The harder I work, the more I live. Life is no brief candle for me. It is a sort of splendid torch, which I have got hold of for the moment. I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it to future generations.

—George Bernard Shaw

Here are a few epitaphs dreamed up by celebrities whose whistling in the dark aren't fooling anybody:

Lionel Barrymore: 'Well, I've played everything but a harp.'

Nunnally Johnson: 'I thought there was a funny taste about that last one.'

W. C. Fields: 'On the whole, I'd rather be in Philadelphia.'

Louis Stone: 'A gentleman farmer goes back to the soil.'

Paul Whiteman: 'Gone to look for the lost chord.'

Wallace Ford: 'At last I get top billing.'

Constance Bennett: 'Do not disturb.'

Eddie Cantor: 'Here in nature's arms I nestle,  
Free at last from Georgie Jessel.'

Fontaine Fox: 'I had a hunch something like this would happen.'

H. G. Wells: 'I told you so, dammit!'

Deems Taylor: 'Here lies Deems Taylor—under protest.'

Warner Baxter: 'Did you hear about my operation?'

Horace Brown (dentist): 'Stranger, approach these bones with gravity;  
Doc Brown is filling his last cavity.'

William Haines: 'Here's something I want to get off my chest.'

Edward Everett Horton: 'A nice part—only four sides'— but good company and in  
for the long run.'

—Bennett Cerf

Hospice means end-of-life care. The admission ticket is a diagnosis from a doctor that you have six months or less to live.

—Eleanor Clift

Americans in 1763 lived always in the shadow and presence of death. Death was not yet romanticized as it would be in the 19th century, nor yet sanitized as it would be in the 20th century.

--Colin G. Calloway

The latest export from Sweden isn't a sturdy station wagon or a funky furniture store, but rather it's a way of life. More specifically, it's a way of end-of-life. It's called *döstädning*, which translates to 'death cleaning.' In the tough-minded ways of the Scandinavian culture, it's a decluttering practice that's more about relieving a burden on family than creating pleasant surroundings. Americans have taken note of the ritual, which can begin as early as one's 50s.

—Chris Wadsworth

I'm leaving my body to science fiction.

—Roseanne Barr

As 1968 began, Paul Ehrlich was an entomologist at Stanford University, known to his peers for his groundbreaking studies of the co-evolution of flowering plants and butterflies but almost unknown to the average person. That was about to change. In May, Ehrlich released a quickly written, cheaply bound paperback, *The Population Bomb*. Initially it was ignored. But over time Ehrlich's tract would sell millions of copies and turn its author into a celebrity. It would become one of most influential books of the 20th Century—and one of the most heatedly attacked.

The first sentence set the tone: 'The battle to feed all of humanity is over.' And humanity had lost. In the 1970s, the book promised, 'hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death.' No matter what people do, 'nothing can prevent a substantial increase in the world death rate.'

—Charles C. Mann

'Face it, George—unlike cholera, death is the only disease everyone is guaranteed to get.'

Heath nodded slowly. 'But usually only once, Hamish. Usually only once.'

--Nigel Holloway

God put me on earth to accomplish a certain number of things. Right now I am so far behind I will never die!

—Unknown

The images we seldom see are the aftermath of violent deaths. Your family newspaper will not print photos of the puddled suicide who jumped from the fourteenth floor. No car wrecks with the body parts unevenly distributed, no murder victim sprawled in his own juices. Despite the endless preaching against violent crime, despite the enormous and avid audience for mayhem, these images are taboo.

--Sean Tejaratchi

As death, when we come to consider it closely, is the true goal of our existence. I have formed during the last few years such close relations with this best and truest friend of mankind, that his image is not only no longer terrifying to me, but is indeed very soothing and consoling. And I thank my God for graciously granting me the opportunity...of learning that death is the key which unlocks the door to our true happiness.

—Wolfgang Amadeus  
Mozart

People who lose their parents when young are permanently in love with them.  
—Aharon Appelfeld

If a man doesn't know death, he doesn't know life.  
—William A. Drake

Wife & I just overheard the kids talking about how they'll decorate the house after we die, so I guess we're sleeping in shifts from now on.  
—Grant Tanaka

[Me, on my deathbed]  
Wife: Is that what you're going to wear?  
—Simon Holland

Grief is like living two lives. One is where you pretend that everything is okay, and the other is where your HEART silently screams in pain.  
—*womenworking.com*

In some parts of Ireland the sleep which knows no waking is always followed by a wake which knows no sleeping.  
—Mary Wilson Little

According to data compiled by the *National Alliance on Mental Illness* and *American Foundation for Suicide Prevention*, approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. experiences mental illness in a given year. Three quarters of all chronic mental illness begins by the age of 24. Nearly 60% of adults with a mental illness did not receive mental health treatment services. On average, there are 123 suicides per day. Men are four times more likely than females to die by suicide.  
—Fred Dobry

Where you used to be, there is a hole in the world, which I find myself constantly walking around in the daytime, and falling in at night. I miss you like hell.  
—Edna St. Vincent Millay

'Me' is what we think when our parents die, even at my age [67], who will look out for me now, who will remember me as I was, who will know what happens to me now, where will I be from.  
—Joan Didion

A woman committed suicide by jumping out a window across from the Waldorf while they were there. Nancy said it was terrible, they had to clean up the street with fire hoses.

—Joan Didion

Perhaps the best cure for the fear of death is to reflect that life has a beginning as well as an end. There was a time when we were not: this gives us no concern—why then should it trouble us that a time will come when we shall cease to be?

—William Hazlitt

A life of action and danger moderates the dread of death. It not only gives us fortitude to bear pain, but teaches us at every step the precarious tenure on which we hold our present being. Sedentary and studious men are the most apprehensive on this score.

—William Hazlitt

I've noticed in my life as a doctor, that the truism is true: people die the way they've lived—even the demented and even, somehow, the brain-dead. The braves die bravely; the curious, with curiosity; the optimistic, optimistically. Those who are by nature accepters, accept; those who by nature fight for control die fighting for control....I've also noticed that everyone I've seen die does come to accept the inevitable loss of control in his or her finally unevadable death. Usually that happens over weeks or months, sometimes over years; occasionally it happens over day, hours, or even minutes. This acceptance is perhaps as developmentally determined as childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age. At the end, something magical appears to occur—something beautiful, something Other—that seems to heal the spirit, allay all fear, and settle, finally, the struggle for control.

—Victoria Sweet

Infants were sometimes born in the convent; but they were always baptized and immediately strangled!

—Maria Monk

There is an ancient saying among men that you cannot thoroughly understand the life of mortals before the man has died, then only can you call it good or bad.

—Sophocles

My son Harmon was a character. He went off the IQ charts at 200. The whole house is cluttered with his inventions. He was murdered in the hippie jungles of Florida in 1972, just two weeks before his 21st birthday. You don't get over that. I often cry when I'm driving alone. What a waste it was.

—Art Shay

Grief, I've learned, is really just love. It's all the love you want to give, but cannot. All that unspent love gathers up in the corners of your eyes, the lump in your throat, and in that hollow part of our chest. Grief is just love with no place to go.

—Jamie Anderson

The celebration of G. B. Shaws 90th birthday sent Statistician M. Pitkin scurrying to the files to see if any writing man of the first order could challenge his record for longevity. Here are some figures he unearthed, arranged in ascending scale. Chatterton died (by his own hand) at 18; Keats at 26; Marlow (in a tavern brawl) at 29; Shelly at 30; Byron at 36; Burns at 37; Jane Austin at 42; De Maupassant at 43; Virgil, Molière, and Balzac at 51; Shakespeare and Thackeray at 52; Dante and Pope at 56; Dickens at 58; Chaucer, Racine, and Hawthorne at 60; Aristotle, Coleridge, and Zola at 62; Milton at 66; Conrad at 67; Cervantes at 69; Defoe at 70; Melville at 72; Sam Johnson at 75; Washington Irving at 76; Browning at 77; Ibsen at 78; Emerson at 79; Plato and Wordsworth at 80, Meredith at 81; Tolstoy at 82; Goethe and Tennyson at 83; Voltaire and Benjamin Franklin at 84; Carlisle at 86; and Hardy at 88.

—Bennett Cerf

In Richmond one day, [Mark] Twain complained of an acute pain in his head. 'It can't be the air or the food you ate in Richmond,' said a native son confidently. There's no healthier city than Richmond. Our death rate is down to one person a day.' 'Run down to the newspaper office,' begged Twain, 'and find out if today's victim has died yet.'

—Bennett Cerf

We've all experienced countless humorous moments, even amid sadness—like the one time I attended a burial where the backhoe fell into the grave.

—Elizabeth Sims

They who go Feel not the pain of parting; it is they Who stay behind that suffer.

—Henry Wadsworth  
Longfellow

Nearly 45,000 people in the United States killed themselves in 2016, an increase of nearly 30 percent since 1999, making suicide the 10th-leading cause of death and one of the few on that list that is still on the rise, according to a report from the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*.

—Burt Constable

It's important to know that people don't want to end their lives—they want to end the pain.

—Rev. Charles Ruby

I spend a few hours by my wife's grave today. She thinks I'm digging a pond.

—*theChive*

We'd like to see a lot more money poured into research on suicide prevention and mental health. Last year, the *National Institutes of Health* spent \$35 million on preventing suicide, which killed about 45,000 people, and \$42 million on West Nile virus, which killed 121 people. The federal suicide prevention grants for states haven't increased since 2013.

As we do more research, that's going to be key to getting more help....A decade ago, suicide often was wrongly treated as an act of weakness, cowardice and selfishness. The death by suicide of beloved comedian Robin Williams in 2014 signaled a bit of a paradigm shift. Society became a bit less judgmental and more understanding. If research funding follows, maybe we can cut suicide deaths by 25 percent during the next decade.

—Gulotta and Alyssa  
Relyea (2018)

Obesity, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, and liver disease are all two to three times more common in individuals who have a family income of less than \$35,000 than those who have a family income greater than \$100,000. Among low-educated, middle-aged whites, the death rate in the United States—alone in the developed world—increased in the first decade and a half of the 21st century. Driving the trend is the rapid growth in what the Princeton economists Anne Case and Angus Deacon call 'deaths of despair'—suicides and alcohol- and drug-related deaths.

—Matthew Stewart

When I die I want all the people I worked with on group projects to lower me in the ground to let me down one last time.

—Internet Meme

There are many who dare not kill themselves for fear of what the neighbors will say.

—Cyril Connolly

The reason so many people turned up at his funeral is that they wanted to make sure he was dead.

—Samuel Goldwyn

Suicide doesn't take the pain away. It passes it to someone else.

—Internet Meme

Live your life well so we don't have to lie at your funeral.

—Church Sign

The art of living well and the art of dying well are one.

—Epicurus

Last reason for reading horror: it's a rehearsal for death. It's a way to get ready. People say there's nothing sure but death and taxes. But that's not really true. There's really only death, you know. Death is the biggie. Two hundred years from now, none of us are going to be here. We're all going to be someplace else. Maybe a better place, maybe a worse place; it may be sort of like New Jersey, but someplace else. The same thing can be said of rabbits and mice and dogs, but we're in a very uncomfortable position: we're the only creatures—at least as far as we know, though it may be true of dolphins and whales and a few other mammals that have very big brains—who are able to contemplate our own end. We know it's going to happen. The electric train goes around and around and it goes under and around the tunnels and over the scenic mountains, but in the end it always goes off the end of the table. Crash.

--Stephen King

When your time comes to die, be not like those whose hearts are filled with fear of death, so that when their time comes they weep and pray for a little more time to live their lives over again in a different way. Sing your death song, and die like a hero going home.

—Tecumseh

When friends and lovers die and your world gets quieter; that's when the silence comes closer; that's when next isn't the least bit theoretical or abstract.

—Bruce Jackson

She [Annie Oakley] was a marvelous woman, kindest hearted, most thoughtful, a wonderful Christian woman.

I went out to see her last Spring in Dayton. She was in bed, had been for months; but she was just as cheerful. I told her I would see her this Fall when I came back and tried to cheer her in the usual dumb way I have of doing such things. She said I wouldn't, but 'I'll meet you.' Well, she will certainly keep her end of the bargain.

—Will Rogers

54 million people who are alive right now will be dead within the year.

—Internet Meme

As one tends to the graves of the dead, so I tend the books. I clean them, do minor repairs, keep them in good order. And every day I open a volume or two, read a few lines or pages, allow the voices of the forgotten dead to resonate inside my head. Do they sense it, these dead writers, when their books are read? Does a pinprick of light appear in their darkness? Is their soul stirred by the feather touch of another mind reading theirs? I do hope so, for it must be very lonely being dead.

--Diane Setterfield

The loss you feel when a loved one dies is not the worst feeling in the world. Missing them for the rest of your life is the worst.

—*SimpleReminders.com*

The death of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world.

—Edgar Allan Poe

### **WHEN I AM DEAD, MY DEAREST**

When I am dead, my dearest,  
Sing no sad songs for me;  
Plant thou no roses at my head,  
Nor shady cypress-tree:  
Be the green grass above me  
With showers and dewdrops wet;  
And if thou wilt, remember,  
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,  
I shall not feel the rain;  
I shall not hear the nightingale  
Sing on, as if in pain:  
And dreaming through the twilight  
That doth not rise nor set,  
Haply I may remember,  
And haply may forget.

—Christina Rossetti

I wake up every morning at nine and grab for the morning paper. Then I look at the obituary page. If my name is not on it, I get up.

—Benjamin Franklin

Yesterday I happened to notice in the mirror that while I have long since grown used to my beard being very grey indeed, I was not prepared to discover that my eyebrows are becoming noticeably shaggy. I feel the tomb is just around the corner. And there are all these books I haven't read yet, even if I am simultaneously reading at least twenty.

--Edward Gorey

If after I die, people want to write my biography, there is nothing simpler. They only need two dates: the date of my birth and the date of my death. Between one and another, every day is mine.

—Fernando Pessoa

Listen, children:  
Your father is dead.  
From his old coats  
I'll make you little jackets;  
I'll make you little trousers  
From his old pants.  
There'll be in his pockets  
Things he used to put there,  
Keys and pennies  
Covered with tobacco;  
Dan shall have the pennies  
To save in his bank;  
Anne shall have the keys  
To make a pretty noise with.  
Life must go on,  
Though good men die;  
Anne, eat your breakfast;  
Dan, take your medicine;  
Life must go on;  
I forget just why.

—Edna St. Vincent  
Millay

When I shut my eyes on this world I'll finally have peace.

—Kevin Walker

The bustle in a house  
The morning after death  
Is solemnest of industries  
Enacted upon earth,—  
The sweeping up the heart,  
And putting love away  
We shall not want to use again  
Until eternity.

—Emily Dickinson

If I die today at age 77, they're not going to say, 'Oh no, what happened?' It's OK to die. Now I don't mean it's OK for anybody I love to die—not at all, God forbid—but for me, yeah, I can check out. I've lived a long time. I don't need to keep trying to prolong my life—I might as well enjoy my life. When I think of dying, I think, Hey, there will still be people who are smiling in the spring sunshine, there will still be people who are dancing and falling in love and discovering new things. So I'm fine with that.

—Barbara Ehrenreichik

When we leave this world, we give up all our possessions and our memories. Love is the only thing we take with us. It is all we carry from one life to the next.

—Lang Leav

If my survival caused another to perish, then death would be sweeter and more beloved.

—Kahlil Gibran