

## **POEMS AND WORDS OF COMFORT**

*'Say not in grief 'he is no more' but live in thankfulness that he was'*

**Hebrew proverb**

*'Yesterday is a memory, tomorrow is a mystery and today is a gift, which is why it is called the present'*

*'What the caterpillar perceives is the end, to the butterfly is just the beginning'*

*'Everything that has a beginning has an ending. Make your peace with that and all will be well'* **Buddhist saying**

*'There was never yet an uninteresting life. Such a thing is an impossibility. Inside of the dullest exterior there is a drama, a comedy and a tragedy'*

**Mark Twain, The refuge of the Derelicts 1905**

*It must be borne in mind that the tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal.*

*The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach.*

*It is not a calamity to die with dreams unfulfilled.*

*But it is a calamity not to dream.*

*It is not a disaster to be unable to capture your ideal,*

*But it is a disaster to no ideal to capture.*

*It is not a disgrace not to reach the stars.*

*But it is a disgrace not to have stars to reach for.*

*Not failure, but low aim is a sin.*

**Dr Benjamin Elijah Mays**

**1894-1984**

### **Do Not Stand At My Grave**

*Do not stand at my grave and weep*

*I am not there, I do not sleep*

*I am a 1,000 winds that blow*

*I am the diamond glints on snow*

*I am the sun on ripened grain*

*I am the gentle autumn rain*

*When you awaken in the morning's hush*

*I am the swift uplifting rush*

*Of quiet birds in circled light*

*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.*

**Anonymous**

### **All Is Well**

*Death is nothing at all,  
I have only slipped into the next room  
I am I and you are you  
Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.  
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.  
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.  
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was,  
Let it be spoken without effect, without the trace of shadow on 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, for an interval, somewhere very near,  
Just around the corner.  
All is well.*

**Henry Scott Holland**

**1847-1918**

**Canon of St Paul's Cathedral**

### **A Child Loaned**

*"I'll lend you for a little time  
A child of Mine." He said.  
"For you to love the while he lives  
And mourn for when he's dead.  
It may be six or seven year  
Or twenty-two or three  
But will you, till I call him back  
Take care of him for Me?  
He'll bring his charms to gladden you  
And should his 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 the child to learn.  
I've looked this wide world over  
In my search for teacher's true,  
And from the throngs that crowd life's lanes,  
I have selected you;  
Now will you give him all your love,*

*Nor think the labour vain  
Nor hate Me when I come to call  
And take him back again?  
I fancied that I heard them say,  
"Dear Lord, They will be done,  
For all the joy Thy child shall bring,  
For 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 planned,  
We'll brave the bitter grief that comes  
And try to understand."*

***Anonymous***

### **High Flight**

*Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings.  
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth  
Of sun split clouds - and done a hundred things  
You have not dreamed of; wheeled and soared and swung  
High in the sunlit silence. Hovering there  
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung  
My eager craft through footless halls of air;  
Up, up the long delirious burning blue  
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace,  
Where never lark nor even eagle flew;  
And while, with silent lifting mind I've trod  
The high, untrespassed sanctity of space  
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.*

***Flying Officer John Gillespie McGee***

***1922-1941***

**Farewell**

*Farewell to Thee! But not farewell  
To all my fondest thoughts of Thee;  
Within my heart they still shall dwell  
And they shall cheer and comfort me.  
Life seems more sweet that Thou didst live  
And men more true Thou wert one;  
Nothing is lost that Thou didst give,  
Nothing destroyed that Thou hast done.*

**Anne Bronte**

**1820-1849**

**Life Goes On**

*If I should go before the rest of you  
Break not a flower  
Nor inscribe a stone  
Nor when I am gone  
Speak in a Sunday voice  
But be the usual selves  
That I have known  
Weep if you must  
Parting is hell  
But life goes on  
So .... sing as well*

**Joyce Grenfell**

**1910-1979**

**Indian Prayer**

*When I am dead  
Cry for me a little  
Think of me sometimes  
But not too much.  
Think of me now and again  
As I was in life  
At some moments it's pleasant to recall  
But not for long.  
Leave me in peace  
And I shall leave you in peace  
And while you live  
Let your thoughts be with the living.*

**Traditional**

## **Remember**

*Remember me when I am gone away,  
Gone far away into the silent land:  
When you can no more hold me by the hand,  
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.  
Remember me when no more day by day  
You tell me of our future that you planned:  
Only remember me; you understand  
It will be late to counsel then or pray.  
Yet if you should forget me for a while  
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:  
For if the darkness and corruption leave  
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,  
Better by far you should forget and smile  
Than that you should remember and be sad.*

**Christina Rossetti**

**1830-1894**

*If I should go tomorrow  
It would never be goodbye,  
For I have left my heart with you,  
So don't you ever cry.  
The love that's deep within me,  
Shall reach you from the stars,  
You'll feel it from the heavens,  
And it will heal the scars.*

**Anonymous**

## **He is Gone**

*You can shed tears that he is gone,  
Or you can smile because he lived,  
You can close your eyes and pray that he will come back,  
Or you can open your eyes and see all that he has left.  
Your heart can be empty because you can't see him  
Or you can be full of the love that you shared,  
You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday,  
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.  
You can remember him and only that he is gone  
Or you can cherish his memory and let it live on,  
You can cry and close your mind be empty and turn your  
back,  
Or you can do what he would want: smile, open your eyes,  
love and go on.*

**Anonymous**

### **What is Dying?**

*I am standing on the seashore,  
A ship sails in the morning breeze and starts for the ocean.  
She is an object of beauty and I stand watching her  
Till at last she fades on the horizon and someone at my side says:  
"She is gone."  
Gone! Where?  
Gone from my sight -m that is all.  
She is just as large in the masts, hull and spars as she was when I saw her  
And just as able to bear her load of living freight to its destination.  
The diminished size and total loss of sight is in me,  
not in her.  
And just at the moment when someone at my side says,  
"She is gone",  
There are others who are watching her coming, and other voices take up a glad shout:  
"There she comes"  
- and that is dying. A horizon and just the limit of our sight.  
Lift us up, Oh Lord, that we may see further.*

**Bishop Brent**

**1862 - 1926**

### **Death Be Not Proud**

*Death, be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;  
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow  
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.  
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,  
Much pleasure - then, from thee much more must flow;  
And soonest our best men with thee do go,  
Rest of their bones and soul's delivery.  
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings and desperate men,  
And dost with poison, war and sickness dwell;  
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well,  
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?  
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,  
And death shall be no more. Death thou shalt die.*

**John Donne**

**1572-1631**

### **Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night**

*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.  
Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked not lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night  
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
And you my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

**Dylan Thomas**

**1914-53**

### **But Not Forgotten**

*I think no matter where you stray,  
That I shall go with you a way.  
Though you may wander sweeter lands,  
You will not forget my hands,  
Nor yet the way I held my head  
Nor the tremulous things I said.  
You will still see me, small and white  
And smiling, in the secret night,  
And feel my arms about you when  
The day comes fluttering back again.  
I think, no matter where you be,  
You'll hold me in your memory  
And keep my image there without me,  
By telling later loves about me.*

**Dorothy Parker**

### **Living Bouquets**

*When I quit this mortal shore  
And mosey 'round this earth no more,  
Do not weep and do not sob;  
I may have found a better job.  
Don't go and buy a large bouquet  
For which you'll find it hard to pay,  
Don't mope around and feel all blue;  
I may be better off than you.  
Don't tell the folks I was a saint  
Or any old thing that I ain't.  
If you have jam like that to spread,  
Please hand it out before I'm dead.  
If you have roses bless your soul,  
Just pin one in my buttonhole  
While I'm alive and well today;  
Don't wait until I'm gone away.*

**Mabel Easley**

### **Funeral Blues**

*Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,  
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,  
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum  
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.  
Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead  
Scribbling on the sky the message *He Is Dead*,  
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,  
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.  
He was my North, my South, my East and West,  
My working week and my Sunday rest,  
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;  
I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong.  
The stars are not wanted now; put out every one:  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;  
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods:  
For nothing now can ever come to any good.*

**Wystan Hugh Auden**

### **Footprints in the Sand**

*One night a man had a dream. He dreamed  
he was walking along the beach with the LORD.*

*Across the sky flashed scenes from his life.  
For each scene he noticed two sets of  
footprints in the sand: one belonging  
to him, and the other to the LORD.*

*When the last scene of his life flashed before him,  
he looked back at the footprints in the sand.*

*He noticed that many times along the path of  
his life there was only one set of footprints.*

*He also noticed that it happened at the very  
lowest and saddest times in his life.*

*This really bothered him and he  
questioned the LORD about it:*

*"LORD, you said that once I decided to follow  
you, you'd walk with me all the way.  
But I have noticed that during the most  
troublesome times in my life,  
there is only one set of footprints.  
I don't understand why when  
I needed you most you would leave me."*

*The LORD replied:*

*"My son, my precious child,  
I love you and I would never leave you.  
During your times of trial and suffering,  
when you see only one set of footprints,  
it was then that I carried you."*

**Mary Stevenson**

### **The Journey of My Life**

*It was beautiful as long as it lasted,  
the journey of my life.*

*I have no regrets whatsoever  
save the pain I'll leave behind.*

*Those dear hearts who love and care ...  
and the strings pulling at the heart and soul ...*

*The strong arms that held me up  
when my own strength let me down.*

*At every turning of my life I came across good friends,  
friends who stood by me*

*even when time raced by me.*

*Farewell, farewell my friend.*

*I smile and bid you goodbye.*

*No, shed no tears for I need them not.*

*All I need is your smile.*

*If you feel sad do think of me for that's what I'll like.*

*When you live in the hearts of those you love  
remember then, you never die.*

**Rabindranath Tagore**

**1861-1941**