POEMS AND READINGS



Compliments of Weston Hospicecare

#### Should we be sad?

Should we be sad, when they are freed from pain?

Should we be sad, knowing we will meet again?

That all their earthly trials are shed,

That they have just gone on ahead?

Should we be sad when weariness and stress have gone at last?

Should we be sad when all the strains of life are past?

When spirits disengaged and free

Can reach new heights and immortality.

Are we then selfish when we mourn?

When they escape from darkness into light?

Let us rejoice to know they are re-born

To planes where souls can rise to any height.

Doris Bone.

#### Farewell

Farewell my friends

It was beautiful

As long as it lasted,

The journey of my life.

I have no regrets

Whatsoever save

The pain I’ll leave behind,

Those dear hearts

Who love and care….

And the string 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 me by.

Farewell, farewell

My friends,

I smile and

Bid you goodbye.

No, shed no tears

For I need them not,

All I need is your smile.

If you feel sad

Do think of me,

For that’s what I’ll like.

When you live in the hearts

Of those you love

Remember then

You never die.

Rabindranath Tagore – Hindu poet.

#### Think of me

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 is pleasant to recall, but not for too long.

Leave me in peace and I will leave you in peace

And while you live, let your thoughts be for the living.

#### Miss Me – but let me go

When I come to the end of my road

And the sun has set for me.

I want no rites in a gloom filled room,

Why weep for a soul set free?

Miss me a little but not too much

And not with your head bowed low,

Remember the times we once shared,

Miss me but let me go.

This is a journey we each must take

And each must take it alone,

It’s all a part of the master plan,

A step on the road to home.

So when you feel lonely, tearful, afraid,

Turn to the love ones we know.

Express your sorrow in the kindest of deeds,

Miss me and let me go.

#### Someday Life Will Get Better – it Will Be Easier To Smile…

I know you are sad today

and I wish I could help you get past your hurting…

But sometimes, it seems we just have to hurt a while,

and no one can show us the way out…

We have to find it for ourselves when the time is right.

For now, just know that it’s alright to hurt

because I will help you with your hurt.

It’s alright to cry, I will share your tears

It is only through crying

that you learn what it is really like to laugh…

Only after feeling sadness

can you really experience joy.

To allow yourself to feel what comes naturally…

but to know that someday life will be easier…

It will be easier to smile.

Larry S. Chengges

#### The Book

Go to that place we loved, our secret place.

Close my eyes and you’ll see my face.

Play that tune, the tune we loved to hear.

Close your eyes and you’ll see me clear.

Walk on the beach or climb to the top of the hill.

Close your eyes and you’ll see me still.

Take a sip of wine, of dark red wine.

Close your eyes and you’ll see me fine.

At night go out and look at the brightest star.

Close your eyes and you’ll see me far.

On a day when the sky is blue and cold and clear,

Close your eyes and you’ll see me near.

Take down a book that would have been my choice.

Open the book. Close your eyes. You’ll hear my voice..

Paul Meadows

#### The Ship.

I am standing upon the foreshore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength and I stand and watch her until at length she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and sky come down to mingle together. Then someone at my side says, “There! She has gone!” “Gone where?” Gone from my sight, that is all. She is just as large in mast and spar and hull as ever she was when she left my side; just as able to bear here load of living freight to the place of her destination. Her diminished size is in me, not in her. And just at that moment when someone at my side says, “There! She’s gone!” there are other eyes watching her coming and other voices ready to take up the glad shout, “Here she comes!” And that is dying. An horizon just the limit of our sight.

Lift us up, Lord, that we may see further.

Victor Hugo, ‘Toilers of the Sea’,
often attributed to Bishop Brent

#### Afterglow

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

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

I’d like to leave an echo whispering softly down the ways,

Of happy times and laughing times and bright and sunny days.

I’d like the tears of those who grieve to dry before the sun

Of happy memories that I leave when life is done.

#### You can shed tears

You can shed tears that she is gone,

Or you can smile because she has lived.

You can close your eyes and pray that she will come back,

Or you can open your eyes and see all that she has left.

Your heart can be empty because you can’t see her,

Or you can be full of the love that you shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday,

Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.

You can remember her and only that she is gone,

Or you can cherish her memory and let it live on.

You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back,

Or you can do what she would want:

Smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

#### Do not stand at my grave and weep

Do not stand at my grave and weep

I am not there; I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow,

I am the diamond glint on snow,

I am the sunlight on ripened grain,

I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you wake in the morning hush

I am the swift, uplifting rush

Of quiet birds in circling flight,

I am the soft starlight at night,

Do not stand at my grave and weep

I am not there – I do not sleep.

#### St John’s Gospel Ch14:1-6, 27

Jesus said: ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me.’

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

#### 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 to 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

#### The Existence of Love

I had thought that your death

Was a waste and a destruction

A pain of grief hardly to be endured.

I am only beginning to learn

That your life was a gift and a growing

And a loving left with me,

That desperation of death

Destroyed the existence of love.

But the fact of death

Cannot destroy what has been given.

I am learning to look at your life again

Instead of your death and your departing.

Marjorie Pizer

#### Life and death are one

Life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one.

In the depth of your hopes and desires lies your silent knowledge of the beyond;

And like seeds dreaming beneath the snow your heart dreams of spring.

Trust the dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity…

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

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

Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.

And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb.

And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.

Kahlil Gibran

#### Lord, we give our loved ones back to you,

Lord, we give our loved ones back to you,

And just as you first gave *him* to us

And did not lose *him* in the giving,

So we have not lost *him*

In returning *him* to you.

For life is eternal

Love is immortal,

Death is only an horizon,

And an horizon is nothing

But the limit of our earthly sight.

We hold *him* close within our hearts,

And there *he* shall remain,

To walk with us throughout our lives

Until we meet again.

William Penn

#### Light me a candle in the darkness

Give me your hand to guide me;

Speak to me softly in the silence

Give me your strength to calm me.

Lift up my eyes to see the dawn

Ending the long night of despair;

Convince me there is always morning

And hope, if you are there.

Help me to walk the road before me

With firm steps, not faltering feet;

Show me the steep and rugged pathway

And the perils I may meet.

Assure me that you are listening

And can hear my prayer;

Light me a candle in the darkness,

And I shall know that you are there.

Rosemary Arthur

#### Footprints in the sand

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord, many scenes from my life flashed across the sky. In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints. Other times there was only one. This bothered me because I noticed during the low periods of my life when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat, I could only see one set of footprints.

So I said to the Lord, ‘You promised me Lord, that if I followed You, You would walk with me always. But I noticed during the most trying periods of my life there has only been one set of prints in the sand. Why, when I needed You most, have you not been there for me?

The Lord replied, ‘The times when you have seen only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you’.

Author unknown

#### Death is nothing at all

Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away into the next room. I am I, and you are you. Whatever we were to each other, that we still are. Call me by my old familiar name, speak to me in the easy way that 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 a 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

#### The Life That I Have

The life that I have

Is all that I have

And the life that I have is all yours.

The love that I have

Of the life that I have

Is yours and yours and yours.

A sleep I shall have

A rest I shall have

Yet death will be but a pause.

For the peace of my years

In the long green grass

Will be yours and yours and yours.

Author unknown

#### Prayer of St Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is discord, union;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

Where there is sadness, joy;

O divine master, grant that we may not so much seek

To be consoled as to console,

To be understood as to understand,

To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. **Amen**

Attributed to St Francis of Assisi

#### Tread Softly

Had I the heavens’ embroidered cloths,

Enwrought with golden and silver light,

The blue and the dim and the dark cloths

Of Night and light and the half-light,

I would spread the cloths under your feet:

But I, being poor, have only my dreams;

I have spread my dreams under your feet,

Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

W. B. Yeats

#### A loved one

A loved one is a treasure of the heart, and losing a loved one is like losing a piece of yourself. But the love that this person brought to you did not leave, for the essence of the soul lingers. It cannot escape from your heart, for it has been there forever. Cling to the memories and let them find their way to heal you. The love and laughter, the joy in the togetherness you shared, will make you strong. You’ll come to realise that your time together, no matter how long, was meant to be and that you were blessed to have such a precious gift of love in your life.

Keep your heart beating with the loving memories, and trust in your faith to guide you through. Know that, though life moves on, the beauty of love stays behind to surround and embrace you. Your loved one has left you that… to hold in your heart forever.

Debbie Peddle

#### Glad to Know You

How can I be glad again when you have died?

How do I pick up the pieces again?

What joy is there in life

That is not changed for me by your absence?

For the moment at least, you are truly gone from me.

A thrush is singing, and playing children yell;

The rose I was given is still unfolding;

A card comes from an old friend.

How can I be glad? I am glad that you lived,

That you gave me so much,

That you were who you were.

I am glad that you were unique, that

Though I shall not find your like again

Your specialness will never be taken away.

The smell of new bread wafts into the street;

Commuters travel home from work on shining rails;

A warm cat blinks and contracts on a window ledge.

I am glad for all you taught me to appreciate,

I am glad for the memories of love I still treasure,

Glad of the things you left behind for me,

All we shared, activities to remember you by;

I am glad for all that you are and were,

And I promise, I promise, - I shall treasure you always.

J S Flood

#### Gardening

Let us commit ourselves to the task of gardening;

Preparing the ground by turning, lifting and sifting the soil of life to enrich it with love and kindness.

Sowing seeds and raising cuttings, sheltering and watering, feeding young shoots and tender plants, young lives and new beginnings with care and compassion,

Nurturing the garden’s growth so that everything in it is allowed to grow, breathe, find its place and fulfil its potential to fruit and flower.

In Spring there is the promise of new life and hope; may we find that hope in our sadness today and be strengthened by our memories of loved ones as we continue on our journey.

#### A Blessed Thing

A blessed thing it is for any man or woman to have a friend; one human soul whom we can trust utterly; who knows the best and the worst of us, and who loves us in spite of all our faults; who will speak the honest truth to us, while the world flatters us to our face and laughs at us behind our back; who will give us counsel and reproof in the day of prosperity and self-conceit; but who, again, will comfort and encourage us in the day of difficulty and sorrow, when the world leaves us alone to fight our battle as we can.

Charles Kingsley

#### Celtic Blessings

Deep peace of the running wave to you,

Deep peace of the flowing air to you,

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,

Deep peace of the shining stars to you,

Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.

May the road rise to meet you;

May the wind be always at your back;

May the sun shine warm upon your face;

May the rains fall softly upon your fields,

Until we meet again,

May God hold you in the hollow of His hand.

Author unknown

#### Walking with grief

O not hurry as you walk with grief… it does not help the journey.

Walk slowly, pausing often.

Do not hurry as you walk with grief.

Be not disturbed by memories that come unhidden

Swiftly forgive and let Christ speak for you unspoken words

Unfinished conversations will be resolved in Him,

Be not disturbed…

Be gentle with the one who walks with grief;

If it is you, be gentle with yourself…

Swiftly forgive ~ walk slowly ~ pause often

Take time; be gentle as you walk with grief

George MacDonald

#### The Rose beyond the wall

A Rose once grew where all could see,

Sheltered beside a garden wall,

And, as the days passed swiftly by,

It spread its branches,

Straight and tall…

One day, a beam of light shone through a crevice that had opened wide –

The Rose bent gently towards its warmth, then passed to the other side.

Now you who deeply feel its loss, be comforted, the Rose blooms there.

Its beauty even greater now

Nurtured by God’s own loving care.

Unknown author

#### A Celtic Prayer.

God of the heights protect and uplift you;

Christ of the depths uphold and sustain you;

Spirit of the slopes guide you and grasp you.

The arm of God be about you,

The way of Christ guide you,

The strength of the Spirit support you.

God be with you on the smooth paths;

Christ be with you in the storms;

The Spirit be with you at all times.

The holy God encircle you and keep you safe;

The mighty God defend you from all dangers;

The loving God give you His peace.

#### Don’t Grieve for me

Don’t grieve for me, for now I’m free,

I’m following the path God laid for me.

I took His hand when I heard Him call,

I turned my back and left it all.

I could not stay another day,

To laugh, to love, to work, to play.

Tasks left undone must stay that way.

I found that place at the close of day.

If my parting has left a void,

Then fill it with remembered joy.

A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,

Ah yes, these things, I too, will miss.

Be not burdened with times of sorrow,

I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.

My life’s been full, I savoured much,

Good friends, good times, a loved one’s touch.

Perhaps my time seemed all too brief,

Don’t lengthen it now with undue grief.

Lift up your heart and share with me,

God wanted me now, He set me free.

#### In Memory of you.

The bells will ring,

The doves will fly,

The clocks will tick,

In memory of you.

The wind will blow,

The snow will fall,

The sun will rise,

In memory of you.

The grass will grow,

The trees will sway,

The flowers will bloom,

In memory of you.

The flags will fly,

The birds will sing,

Forever and always,

In memory of you.

#### His journey’s just begun.

Don’t think of him as gone away

His journey’s just begun.

Life holds so many facets

This earth is only one.

Just think of him as resting

From the sorrows and the tears,

In a place of warmth and comfort

Where there are no days or years.

Think how he must be wishing

That we could know today

How nothing but our sadness

Can really pass away.

And think of him as living

In the hearts of those he touched,

For nothing loved is ever lost

And he was loved so much.

#### A round turn and two half hitches.

A round turn and two half hitches

Ties my life to you,

Yes, there have been many glitches,

But the rope stayed long and true,

Even when the storms came,

The rope stayed long and strong.

But I had to let the rope go,

When you closed your eyes to leave.

It’s a strong rope and a long rope,

Which took our lives to reeve.

So I’ll splice your end to my end,

Even if the rope is half as long,

I will never splice another,

But the rope is twice as strong...

#### The Dash

I read of a manwho stood to speak at the

funeral of a friend

He referred to the dates on his tombstone

From beginning to the end.

He noted that first came the date of his birth,

And spoke of the following date with tears.

But he said what mattered most of all,

Was the dash between the years.

For that dash represents all the time,

That he spent alive on Earth,

And now only those who loved him,

Know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not how much we own,

The cars, the house, the cash

What matters is how we live and love,

And how we spend our dash.

So think about this long and hard,

Are there things you’d like to change?

For you never know how much time is left,

That can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough,

To consider what’s true and real,

And always try to understand,

The way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger,

And show appreciation more,

And love the people in our lives,

Like we’ve never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect,

And more often with a smile,

Remembering that this special dash,

Might only last a while.

So when your eulogy is being read,

With your life’s actions to rehash,

Would you be proud of the things they say?

About how you spent your dash?

#### The Loom of Time

Man’s life is laid in the loom of time

To a pattern he does not see,

While the weaver works and the shuttles fly

Till the dawn of eternity.

Some shuttles are filled with silver threads

And some with threads of gold,

While often but the darker hues

Are all that they may hold.

But the weaver watches with skilful eye

Each shuttle fly to and fro,

And sees the pattern so deftly wrought

As the loom moves sure and slow.

God surely planned the pattern:

Each thread, the dark and the fair,

Is chosen by His masters skill

And placed in the web with care.

He only knows its beauty,

And guides the shuttles which hold
The threads so unattractive

As well as the threads of gold.

Not till each loom is silent,

And the shuttles cease to fly,

Shall God reveal the pattern

And explain the reason why

The dark threads were as needed

In the weaver's skilful hand

As the threads of gold and silver

For the pattern which He planned.

#### The Unknown Shore

Sometime at eve when tide is low,

I shall slip my mooring and sail away,

With no response to the friendly hail

Of kindred craft in the busy bay.

In the quiet hush of the twilight pale,

When night stoops down to embrace the day,

And the voice call and the water flow;

Sometime at eve when the tide is low,

I shall slip my mooring and sail away.

Through purple shadows that darkly trail

O’er the ebbing tide of the unknown sea,

I shall fare me away with a dip of sail

And ripple of water to tell the tale

Of a lonely voyager sailing away

To mystic isles where at anchor lay

The craft of those who have gone before

O’er the unknown sea to the unknown shore.

A few who have watched me sail away

Will miss my craft from the busy bay.

Some loving souls that my heart holds dear,

In silent sorrow will drop a tear,

But I shall have peacefully furled my sail

In moorings sheltered from storm and gale,

And greet family and friends who have gone before

O’er the unknown sea to the unknown shore.

Elizabeth Clark Hardy (1849-1929)

#### Returning

When we have done

All the work we were sent

To earth to do,

We are allowed to shed our body.

Which imprisons our soul,

Like a cocoon encloses a future butterfly.

And when the time comes,

We can let go of it,

And we will be free of pain,

Free of fears and worries,

Free as a beautiful butterfly

Returning home from God.

Elizabeth Ross (1926-2004)

#### Parting

If I should go before the rest of you

Break not a flower nor inscribe a stone

Nor when I’m gone speak in a Sunday voice

But be the usual selves that I have known.

Weep if you must,

Parting is hell,

But life goes on,

So sing as well.

Joyce Grenfell (1910-79)

#### Four candles

Let the light of the years shine on the event,

Rather than letting the event cast its darkness on the years!

The first candle represents our grief.

The pain of losing you is intense.

It reminds us of the depth of our love for you.

The second candle represents our courage.

To confront our sorrow,

To comfort each other,

To change our lives.

The third candle we light in your memory.

For the times we laughed,

The times we cried,

The times we were angry with each other,

The silly things you did,

The caring and joy you gave us.

The fourth candle we light for our love.

We light this candle that your light will always shine

As we enter this sad time and share this day of remembrance

With family and friends.

We cherish the special place in our hearts

That will always be reserved for you.

We thank you for the gift

Your living brought to each of us.

Author unknown

#### Look for me in Rainbows

Time for me to go now, I won’t say goodbye

Look for me in rainbows, way up in the sky

In the morning sunrise, when all the word is new

Just look for me and love me, as you know I loved you

Time for me to leave you, I won’t say goodbye

Look for me in rainbows, high up in the sky

In the evening sunset, when all the world is through

Just look for me and love me, and I’ll be close to you

It won’t be forever, the day will come and then

My loving arms will hold you, when we meet again

Time for us to part now, we won’t say goodbye

Look for me in rainbows, shining in the sky

Every waking moment, all your whole life through

Just look for me and love me, as you know I loved you

Just wish me to be near you and I’ll be there with you.