

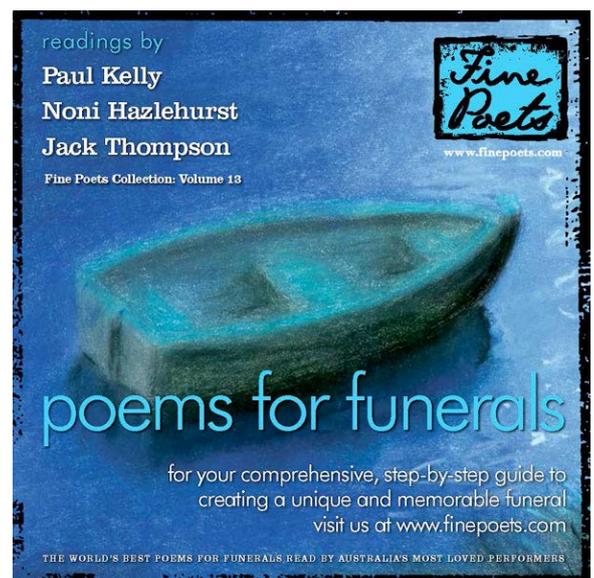
Your comprehensive, step-by-step guide to creating a unique and memorable funeral

A MEMORABLE FUNERAL

When someone close to you dies, organising the funeral and doing it well is a rite of passage that assists with the grieving journey.

A satisfying funeral, which does justice to the person who has died and nourishes everybody present, is something worth striving for. This booklet is designed to help you plan the event and get it right. It is easily adapted to all kinds of funerals but is especially designed for those who crave a sense of the spiritual while not being actively religious. In our experience, a family, with the support of a trained celebrant, creates the best funeral.

Funeral directors are responsible for handling the body and we need them for that. Their expertise is in the hardware of funerals – coffins, hearses, cremation and so on. But they are not necessarily the best people to assist you with the preparation of a moving and memorable ceremony. That's the job of a celebrant and the family.



“
Playing one of the tracks
from our Poems for Funerals
CD brings people slowly and
appropriately out of the two
minutes of individual reflection
and back into the ceremony.”



We suggest you choose your own celebrant and, if possible, do so before you choose the funeral director. Select a celebrant who is independent of the funeral director. Everything becomes easier after that. Mostly celebrants charge by the hour so you can decide exactly how much of their expertise you wish to draw upon.

A trained funeral celebrant will know who the most appropriate funeral directors are in your area. At the end of this booklet, you'll find a list of trained celebrants that we recommend.

If in doubt, ring Fine Poets on 02 9665 6135 and we'll try to connect you with someone best suited for you. The list on our website www.finepoets.com is constantly updated.

Once you choose the celebrant, they can recommend a funeral director and deal with them for you, making sure you're not railroaded into anything you don't want, such as an overly expensive coffin, or too short a time at the crematorium.

By working with you and preparing well, they'll make sure that everything runs beautifully on the day. There'll be no getting of names wrong, and no awful clangers from lack of preparation. They'll take the time to get it right.

For the purposes of this booklet, we will assume that you have selected a funeral celebrant or decided that a family member will conduct the service, and that a funeral director of your choice has been engaged to take care of the body until the funeral can be arranged.

Of course you can vary the structure proposed below. But if you follow it, you can be assured of a well-prepared event: one that is well timed, well structured and satisfying for all who attend.

Much can be done ahead of time if you know that death is imminent.

We recommend:

1. GET THE CELEBRANT TO HELP YOU CHOOSE A COFFIN

Ask your celebrant for help to find the right coffin; there is a lot more choice these days so draw on their experience. Simple cardboard coffins can be perfectly appropriate for a cremation. You can set the budget for things such as coffins, cars and flowers more easily with your celebrant, rather than having to conduct your own negotiations at a funeral parlour in the midst of your grief. Your celebrant can organise it for you as a neutral, supportive participant. Celebrants are good people committed to their work and you can rely on their advice.

2. GIVE YOURSELF ENOUGH TIME

It takes at least five days to organise a suitable funeral, so don't be rushed into anything sooner. You and your family need time to adjust, people often need to travel from interstate to attend, and there will necessarily be lots of discussion within the family. Even though part of you feels that you just want to get it over with, the preparation of a quality funeral service benefits from taking time to think things through, to do some research, find missing documents, check facts and then write and perhaps revise the service so that everybody is happy with it. There is no need to rush the arrangements. Stress from time pressure just complicates matters that are complex enough.

3. CHOOSE AN APPROPRIATE VENUE WITH SUFFICIENT CAPACITY

Generally speaking, more people will turn up at the funeral than you imagine. They all deserve a seat. You don't have to have the funeral at a church or funeral parlour – you can have one anywhere, even at home. There are no laws in Australia that stipulate where funerals must be held.

There's a list of interesting venues in each state at the end of this booklet. We do recommend holding funerals indoors – an outdoor venue can be tricky for all sorts of reasons, weather being the most obvious.

If it is to be a large funeral, a rehearsal is a good idea.

4. ALLOW AT LEAST AN HOUR AT THE VENUE

No matter which venue you choose for the funeral service, and regardless of who is conducting it, we suggest you allow at least an hour for the proceedings to take place. Do not be fobbed off with, "It's only available for 30 minutes, otherwise you'll have to wait a week or more." You'll regret it. Choose a different venue instead.

A satisfying funeral service that pays proper tribute to the deceased rarely takes less than 60 minutes by the time people arrive, exchange greetings and commune with each other afterwards. The customary wake or afternoon tea has a different function and not everybody will be able to attend.

Here at Fine Poets, we recommend that the venue be booked for at least an hour and a quarter, to allow for unfettered access beforehand. (You might choose to do the flowers yourself or have a private viewing of the deceased before the bulk of mourners arrive.) This amount of time avoids any awkward queues waiting for one funeral party to exit before another can go in.

At a funeral, people appreciate the time and space to be together, mutually focused on the person who has died. This feeling of togetherness is critically helpful to everyone's grieving process and should not be rushed for the venue's administrative convenience. Insist on the time you need. You'll feel better afterwards.

5. PALL BEARERS

The grown-up children of the deceased often find it fitting to act as pallbearers, to shoulder the burden of their parent for the final journey.

Otherwise, request friends or other close members of the family to do the job. You'll save money by using less funeral company staff and most people will find it an honour to be asked. Younger children can follow the coffin out.

6. DELEGATE!

Try to divide these jobs between available family members. Give one person each job:

- a. Put notices in newspapers, especially the local ones; interstate and international ones if the deceased was someone who lived a well-travelled life.
- b. Put notices on internet memorial sites.
- c. Choose and have somebody deliver clothes to the funeral directors for the deceased to wear in the coffin. Is there anything else a family member wants to put in the coffin? This should be delivered at the same time.
- d. Order or provide flowers for the coffin and the venue. Is there something else that should be placed on the coffin, such as a signature item of clothing, club flags, medals or special photos? Deputise someone to collect any flowers from the venue or the coffin after the funeral if you would like to take them home rather than let them be discarded.
- e. If a lot of children are likely to attend, deputise a responsible member of the family to be ready to take them outside if they become disruptive. Let parents know that this option is available. A funeral is a once in a lifetime occasion and the adults deserve to have the funeral uninterrupted. The children will be happier distracted outside the venue.
- f. Brief the older teenagers or other family members to be formal ushers and to get to the funeral venue early. They should be asked to encourage people to take seats in the front rows and, most importantly, to facilitate introductions between people sitting in the same row. Attendees may be shy and not necessarily know anybody else. The front seats need to be filled so that speakers can be easily heard and so that the venue feels nicely full of mourners. A friendly gathering feels better than one where nobody knows who anybody else is.

Make sure the ushers know to show elderly or infirm people to seats on the ends of rows. Ask your ushers to identify the best places for wheelchair and walker users. Often a chair or two can be removed from the end of a row.

Make sure all the ushers know where the toilets are so that they can pass on this information. Should signs be put up? It can be a good idea to purchase a couple of small boxes of tissues to be put discreetly on the ends of some of the rows before the ceremony. Teenagers love to be given responsible jobs and usually rise to the task.

Give the ushers sheets of paper labelled “Reserved for (insert name of speaker)” for each person speaking at the funeral. These labels should be taped onto seats in the front rows to allow speakers quick access to the podium.

Appoint one usher as Chief Usher to direct the others.

g. Ask a more distant member of the family or friend to ring as many people as possible to tell them about the time and date of the funeral.

h. Ask one member of the family to organise the transporting of any guests who may not drive, or who may need collecting from airports or train stations. This person doesn't have to do all the pick-ups by themselves, just coordinate other friends and family members so that the pick-ups are done. You will find that EVERYBODY wants to help in whatever way they can.

7. SOUND AND VISION PLANNING

A few days before the funeral, go to the venue and test the sound system. Check that your music/readings are in a form that the venue can play. Do not take anyone's word for granted about this. Go and check out the system, if you are the person in charge of music.

Photograph the back and front of the music/sound/projector systems at the venue so that anyone who needs to use it can check what medium it plays and what the socket holes for the input plugs look like and where things need to be set up. Smart phones are handy for this task.

You could combine this visit with a rehearsal for the main eulogist, so they can familiarise themselves with the space and do their checks, too. This pre-visit also helps to discover any unforeseen delay-makers such as roadworks or building noise.

Take the Chief Usher with you to see if any other finessing of signage is needed and so that they can see what else may be required. Check whether side or back doors exist and who has the keys, and whether they will be already open on the day in case you wish to use them.

From now on, we will simply call the person leading the funeral the celebrant, whether it is a trained professional or a family member or friend.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SERVICE

We suggest aiming for a funeral to commence no earlier than midday, to allow people time to come from afar. For the purposes of this example, we'll say that people are invited for **12:00 midday**.

You can adjust the timings to suit your start time, but try to follow the segment timings and you'll be guaranteed a funeral that flows and finishes well.

11:45 People start arriving at the venue, so the coffin needs to be already in place if the decision has been made to have it in situ rather than carried in as part of the ceremony. Music is playing softly. If you have them, photos are turning over on the projection screen. Make sure you have at least 30 minutes of music available for this stage in case there are unforeseen delays. Ushers should be on duty; flowers in place.

11:50 Chief mourners arrive and greet guests.

12:00 The celebrant takes the microphone and the music stops. The celebrant welcomes everybody. At this point, he or she uses words such as:

"My name is Joan Smith, I am a friend of the family and it is my sad pleasure to welcome you here today to mourn the death and celebrate the life of June Brown, who died on Tuesday, September 3 this year at 11.30pm, at St Vincent's Hospital. She had endured cancer for some years."

People attending the funeral appreciate knowing the facts of the death. If there is some delicacy required, such as in the case of a suicide, plain speaking is usually the best solution, indeed often a relief

A little biographical information is welcome at this point: where the person was born, where they lived, what their principal occupation was and, most importantly, who the family members were or are. Do list them all, right through to the great grandchildren. Omissions can be hurtful and everybody will love to hear their relationship acknowledged. Be generous.

It is important to acknowledge the feelings of everyone gathered and to mention if you are reading for a family member who for one reason or another is not able to speak on the day. It is then appropriate to introduce the first speaker by name and their relationship to the deceased.

12:05 Life and Times speaker begins. Three to five spoken minutes will be more than enough here. This speaker is perhaps an older cousin or someone who can speak about the early life and times of the deceased, the world they were born into, the changes they saw, the music, the social mores of the day, what people ate, their attitudes to things. This is the scene-setting prior to the eulogy.

12:09 The celebrant returns, thanks the Life and Times speaker, and introduces the next speaker.

12:10 Second Tribute speaker. There is no correct number of speakers, but care should be taken to ensure that there is no repetition of story. Dividing responsibility up by time frame (one does the early life, another the family years, the middle age, the later years or so on) or by subject (as a father, as a husband, as a professional, as a grandparent) works well.

Any other speakers who wish to pay tribute can speak at this point, all leading up to the Eulogy. Adjust the timing to suit, but probably no more than two speakers is a good idea. (Others keen to speak could be offered an opportunity at the wake.)

12:15 The celebrant returns, thanks the Tribute speaker, and introduces the next speaker who will deliver the main Eulogy.

THE EULOGY

No matter who gives the eulogy, whether it be the celebrant, a family member or friend, a well-written eulogy needs input from many people if it is to properly put the deceased's life on record in an appreciative and comprehensive way. The point of the eulogy is to show to all present that the deceased person's life mattered. It is the most important part of the proceedings.

To that end, it needs to be factually correct. You are aiming to capture the essence of the person being eulogised. Authenticity is the key. A witty aside or two or a funny story provides a welcome breather from all the sadness.

You don't have to be the best speechmaker in the world, but you do need to be speaking words you know are true and that you sincerely feel.

Your audience needs to feel that justice has been done, that the eulogy captured the measure of the person and that appropriate acknowledgements have been made. Consulting with the deceased's family and friends during the writing of it is essential. Certainly, all the immediate family should know and approve of what is going to be said. The eulogy is no place for settling scores. You want everybody present to feel a sense of pride and contentment about what has been said, nothing less. It is the most important part of the ceremony.

HINTS FOR THE EULOGY SPEAKER

- a. Print out your eulogy in a large font, at least 16 point, for easy reading on the day.
- b. Insert page numbers on each page in case you drop them or get in a muddle.
- c. Practise delivering it. Change the words if you stumble over any particular passage. There's always another way to say the same thing.
- d. Keep to one or two paragraphs on each page. Try looking up to engage with the crowd as you finish

each page. You don't need to rush. The more you can engage with the mourners, the better the eulogy.

e. Ask family members to check the eulogy for mistakes and to make sure that you are not unwittingly offending someone. An authentically written and felt eulogy assists the grieving process for everybody. People want their hearts open to feel simple grief. They don't want the grief complicated by argument, accusation or unfinished business. The truth is important, and there are ways of saying things without giving offence. The best eulogies are written with maximum kindness of spirit and great generosity. If in doubt, leave it out.

f. Ask somebody to be on standby to take over your delivery of the Eulogy if you become too emotional to continue. A few tears are okay, but people want to hear what you are saying, not be hanging on a knife edge wondering whether you will be able to go on saying it. You don't want to take them away from the rightful consideration of the life being spoken of to worry about your ability to finish. As long as your words and thoughts are expressed, it will feel okay if someone else finishes reading them on your behalf.

HELP IS AVAILABLE

If you need help writing the eulogy, Fine Poets offer a service where one of our people will write it for you after just one meeting or a phone call to collect all the necessary information. We can meet you at your house, you can come to our office, or it can all be done by email. We charge a very modest fee for eulogy writing and guarantee it will match the occasion and capture the person well. We work quickly. Tel 02 9665 6135 for help.

HELP FOR THE EULOGY WRITER

The best eulogies are well researched. To speed up the process, provide lists that the eulogy writer can draw on or be inspired by. Lists of the following can be very helpful to stimulate the writing:

- Special talents
- Favourite holidays
- Favourite cooking
- Favourite clothes
- All their different jobs
- Funny, signature sayings
- Special relationships
- Favourite books or writers
- Favourite music
- Philosophies of life

12:25 The celebrant returns, thanks the eulogist, and calls for **TWO MINUTES OF SILENT REFLECTION**. These two minutes allow people to sit and reflect on the words that have been spoken and to feel their personal grief. Instrumental music can be played.

Ease people back into the service, by playing of one of the poems from our Poems for Funerals CD.

BEST WAYS TO INVOLVE CHILDREN

Don't let amateurs or children provide the music or sing a solo. It's usually awful for everyone other than their parents and people can be embarrassed by it. The embarrassment takes mourners away from their central focus in being there: grieving together. There are lots of other ways that children can participate meaningfully: as ushers, making a guard of honour, as food and drink waiters at the wake, sitting with older people who come on their own, distributing booklets and so on.

12:30 FURTHER REFLECTION AND COMMITTAL

The celebrant returns and sums up everything that has been said, and then turns her attention to the deceased. The words may be along the lines of:

"June, your life mattered to everybody here today. Your spirit will live on in every member of your family and in those who loved you.

"As much as we mourn your loss from our daily lives, we also celebrate your life and our great fortune in having known you. We hope that your spirit feels our respect and love now and is nourished by it.

"Will you all please stand as June's children (or the pallbearers) carry her coffin from the chapel?"

As the pallbearers exit the building, the music swells, the celebrant then says, *"Thank you, our farewell tribute to June is now complete. The family would like you to join them for afternoon tea at ..."* (The wake information can also be printed on the program booklet).

MUSIC AND SOUND AT THE FUNERAL

We suggest that music and/or readings for a funeral are played at four main points in the ceremony

1. ON ARRIVAL: As people arrive, and prior to the welcome and introduction by the celebrant, it is nice to have some instrumental music playing. It is simpler to have the coffin already in place at the front of the room at this point, but if it is to be brought in, then the celebrant should ask everybody to stand for this solemn procession and appropriate music be provided. If there are plenty of images to choose from, it can be also be helpful to have photos from the life of the deceased being displayed with the arrival music, as the mourners arrive and are shown to their seats by the ushers.

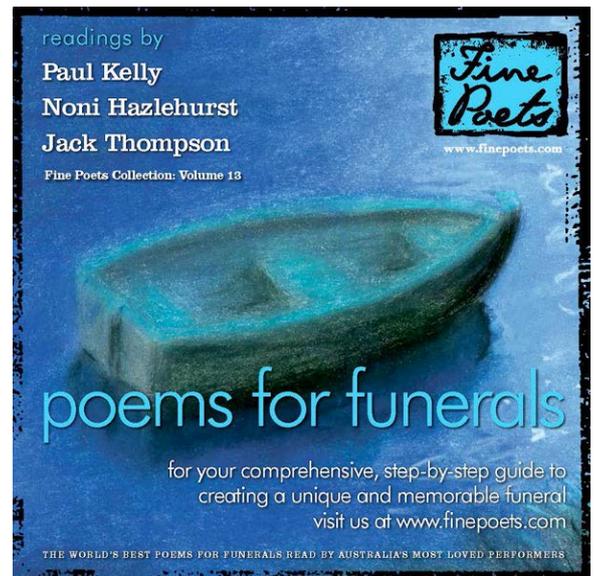
2. TWO MINUTES REFLECTION: Two minutes of silent reflection, during which soft instrumental music works well.

3. POEM: Playing one of the tracks from our Poems for Funerals CD brings people slowly and appropriately out of the two minutes of individual reflection and back into the ceremony.

4. THE COMMITTAL:

As the coffin is taken from the venue, or goes behind the curtain at the crematorium, the celebrant will ask everybody to stand for this final farewell. This is the place for another piece of music or several pieces, chosen and played in succession. It needs to be long enough to see both coffin and mourners out of the auditorium, so select it according to the size of the venue.

A piece of music with a swelling, clear finale can be very satisfying. The ending of this piece is a useful signal to people to exit the venue.



“Playing one of the tracks from our Poems for Funerals CD brings people slowly and appropriately out of the two minutes of individual reflection and back into the ceremony.”

ASSISTANCE WITH WRITING

If you would like help to write a memorable funeral service, please call Glenys Rowe at Fine Poets on 0411 254 255.

Fine Poets is a company staffed by people who believe that funerals should be satisfying. We enjoy helping people to get them just right. We charge modestly for our writing services.

PROGRAM BOOKLET DESIGN

If you would like professional help to design your Order of Service booklet, we suggest Anthony Wyld at Wide Open Media. He is an experienced and sensitive designer. Contact Anthony on 0419 225 348 or anthony@wideopenmedia.com.au

You can see examples of his work opposite. There are templates where you simply fill in the gaps and upload photos to create your own booklet. If you prefer a bespoke service, he will also work with you to create a unique document.





FINE FUNERAL VENUES IN YOUR STATE

A good funeral should feel authentic and that's why a church isn't always the right venue if the deceased wasn't particularly religious. In an increasingly secular world, finding venues that elevate the spirit or have a sense of the sacred about them is not always easy, but we've done our best.

Lack of space prevents us listing them all with their details here, but you can Google the ones below and find what you need.

If you prefer, email us at info@finepoets.com and tell us in which area you need the venue and we'll do our best to help you find the perfect space. The list below will be updated regularly until it becomes a comprehensive list of lovely, moderately priced venues all over Australia.

We'd be grateful if you would let us know of any others that you think work well.

A SELECTION OF VENUES BY STATE:

NEW SOUTH WALES

The Nurses Chapel,
overlooking the sea at Little Bay in Sydney.
Email: phhtnachapelbookings@gmail.com
Tel: 0447 614 137

The Regal Cinema, Newcastle.
This charming little turn of the century
wooden building has been refurbished.
It seats 117 people and is suitable for
funerals and memorial services.
Email: jo@agsc.org.au
Tel 0411 888 664

VICTORIA

Chateau Wyunaa
A simple ex-Methodist church in Mt Evelyn.
www.chateauwyuna.com.au
Tel: 03 9736 2555

Monash University Religious Centre,
Wellington Road, Clayton.
www.monash.edu.au/spirituality/religious-centre-details-bookings.html
Tel: 03 9905 1773

Montsalvat, Hill Crest Road, Eltham
Email: montsalvat@montsalvat.com.au
Tel: 03 9439 8771

The Police Chapel
1 View Mt Rd Glen Waverley
Tel: 03 9566 9611

Mission to Seafarers
(Chapel or the Dome Room),
717 Flinders St, Docklands
Tel: 03 9629 7083

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Jeffries Chapel at Westminster School.
Email: fwinwood@westminster.sa.edu.au
Tel: 08 8276 0276

St Ignatius College Chapel,
Athelstone, Adelaide.
www.ignatius.sa.edu.au/schoolcommunity-detail11/chapel-bookings/
Tel: 08 8334 9300

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Worship Centre, Murdoch University.
Email: roombook@murdoch.edu.au
Tel: 08 9360 7564

QUEENSLAND

St.Mary's by the Sea, Port Douglas
Email: info@communityfunerals.com.au
Tel: 07 4098 2655.

St.David's Under The Rain Trees, Mossman
Email: mpdanglicans@bigpond.com
Tel: 07 4098 2762

Holy Rosary Church, Mt.Garnet, Cairns
PO Box 249, Ravenshoe Qld 4872
Tel: 07 4097 6180

NORTHERN TERRITORY

St.Mary's
Star of the Sea Cathedral, Darwin
Email: cathedral@darwin.catholic.org.au
Tel: 08 8946 2800

CELEBRANTS WE RECOMMEND:

NEW SOUTH WALES

Victoria Spence, Earlwood.
www.victoriaspencecelebrant.com
Tel: 0431 123 129

Melissa Halliday, Newtown.
Email: villachaska@optusnet.com.au
Tel: 0425 213 338

VICTORIA

Dally Messenger, Melbourne.
dallymessenger@mac.com
Tel: 0411 717 303

Sally Cant, Rowville.
www.sallycant.com.au
Tel: 0408 691 405

QUEENSLAND

Leone Oakhill, Brisbane.
Tel: 0419 738 534
www.leoneoakhill.com.au

Ross Simmons, Port Douglas.
www.rosssimmons.com.au
Tel: 0417 379 522

1. THE 23RD PSALM The Holy Bible: King James Version, 2000.

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

2. ECCLESIASTES 3

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.
A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, anda time of peace.

3. HE IS GONE by David Harkins

You can shed tears that he is gone
Or you can smile because he has lived
You can close your eyes and pray that he will come back
Or you can open your eyes and see all that he has left
Your heart can be empty because you can't see him
Or 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.

4. SHE IS GONE

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

5. A RUSSIAN LAMENT (anonymous)

the sun the moon the north the south
none of them work anymore, no compass points the way for the loved
the snow the sea the ice the wind
are no longer cold to this loved human body
if my body would release me I would fly straight to your love
but I will wait, and remember our sun and moon and north and south
your snow and sea and ice and wind
are warm and encompassing to this loved who waits
who waits and laughs and remembers
a love that is crystal clear and translucent, sparkles and fractured across our time
every glance every time every moment
a golden glaze on a lovers loved life, together, a soft wool, a tired cloth, an old chair
to have this now, a sweetness of memory and
the loved who waits, with grace, can smile

6. THE BEAUTY OF DEATH PART 2 by Kahlil Gibran (excerpt)

I have passed a mountain peak and my soul is soaring in the
Firmament of complete and unbound freedom;
I am far, far away, my companions, and the clouds are
Hiding the hills from my eyes.
The valleys are becoming flooded with an ocean of silence, and the
Hands of oblivion are engulfing the roads and the houses;
The prairies and fields are disappearing behind a white specter
That looks like the spring cloud, yellow as the candlelight
And red as the twilight.

The songs of the waves and the hymns of the streams
Are scattered, and the voices of the throngs reduced to silence;
And I can hear naught but the music of Eternity
In exact harmony with the spirit's desires.
I am cloaked in full whiteness;
I am in comfort; I am in peace.

7. ON DEATH BY KHLIL GIBRAN

You would know the secret of death.
But how shall you find it unless you seek it in the heart of life?
The owl whose night-bound eyes are blind unto the day cannot unveil the mystery of light.
If you would indeed behold the spirit of death, open your heart wide unto the body of life.
For 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.
Your fear of death is but the trembling of the shepherd when he stands before the king whose hand is to be laid upon him in honour.

Is the shepherd not joyful beneath his trembling, that he shall wear the mark of the king?
Yet is he not more mindful of his trembling?

For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt 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.

8. DESIDERATA by Max Ehrmann

Go placidly amid the noise and haste,
and remember what peace there may be in silence.
As far as possible without surrender
be on good terms with all persons.
Speak your truth quietly and clearly;
and listen to others,
even the dull and the ignorant;
they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons,
they are vexations to the spirit.
If you compare yourself with others,
you may become vain and bitter;
for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.
Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own career, however humble;
it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.
Exercise caution in your business affairs;
for the world is full of trickery.

But let this not blind you to what virtue there is;
many persons strive for high ideals;
and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself.
Especially, do not feign affection.
Neither be cynical about love;
for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment
it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years,
gracefully surrendering the things of youth.
Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.
But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings.
Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.
Beyond a wholesome discipline,
be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe,
no less than the trees and the stars;
you have a right to be here.
And whether or not it is clear to you,
no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God,
whatever you conceive Him to be,
and whatever your labors and aspirations,
in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams,
it is still a beautiful world.
Be cheerful.
Strive to be happy.

9. IT IS NO SMALL THING... by Matthew Arnold.

It is no small a thing to have enjoyed the sun, to have lived light in the spring, to have loved, to have thought, to have done.

10. A RUSSIAN LAMENT (anonymous)

the sun the moon the north the south
none of them work anymore, no compass points the way for the loved

the snow the sea the ice the wind
are no longer cold to this loved human body

if my body would release me I would fly straight to your love

but I will wait, and remember our sun and moon and north and south

your snow and sea and ice and wind
are warm and encompassing to this loved who waits

who waits and laughs and remembers
a love that is crystal clear and translucent, sparkles and fractured across our time

every glance every time every moment
a golden glaze on a lovers loved life, together, a soft wool, a tired cloth, an old chair

to have this now, a sweetness of memory and
the loved who waits, with grace, can smile

11. I STROVE WITH NONE by Walter Savage Landor

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife.
Nature I loved, and, next to nature, Art;
I warm'd both hands before the fire of Life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

12. ECCLESIASTES 3

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.
A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, anda time of peace.
Be happy and do good while you live.

13. TRADITIONAL GAELIC BLESSING (anonymous)

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields and,
Until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

14. IN PRAISE OF A MAN by Norman MacCaig

The beneficent lights dim but don't vanish.
The razory edges dull, but still cut.
He's gone:
but you can see his tracks still, in the snow of the world

15. NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN PRAYER (traditional)

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.

16. DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT by Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rage 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 no 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.

17. DEATH STANDS ABOVE ME, WHISPERING LOW by Walter Savage Landor

Death stands above me, whispering low
I know not what into my ear:
Of his strange language all I know
Is, there is not a word of fear.

18. "HOW DO I LOVE THEE? LET ME COUNT THE WAYS..." by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with a passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints, --- I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! --- and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

19. ON DEATH by Kahlil Gibran(excerpt)

For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt 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.

20. THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE by Algernon Charles Swinburne

Here, where the world is quiet,
Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
In doubtful dreams of dreams;
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest time and mowing,
A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
And men that laugh and weep
Of what may come hereafter
For men that sow to reap:
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers
And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbour,



And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labor,
Weak ships and spirits steer;
They drive adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither;
But no such winds blow hither,
And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
No heather-flower or vine,
But bloomless buds of poppies,
Green grapes of Proserpine,
Pale beds of blowing rushes
Where no leaf blooms or blushes,
Save this whereout she crushes
For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber
All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell;
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes;
And well though love reposes,
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her
To men that mix and meet her
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born;
Forgets the earth her mother,



The life of fruits and corn;
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw thither,
And all disastrous things;
Dead dreams of days forsaken
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
And joy was never sure;
To-day will die to-morrow
Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light:
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight:
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal;
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

21. THE ROAD NOT TAKEN by Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

22. IMPRESSIONS UNFORGETTABLE by Saigyō

You left impressions unforgettable.
And when I view the moon, your image surfaces
And then love seems forever.

23. MY MIND REMEMBERS by John Masefield

Only stay quiet while my mind remembers
the beauty of fires from the beauty of embers.

24. BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT from the English Standard Version Bible, Matthew 5:3-12

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons[a] of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

25. LADY HEGURI (Traditional Japanese)

A thousand years, you said,
as our hearts melted.
I look at the hand you held,
and the ache is hard to bear.

26. AND WHEN THE STREAM THAT OVERFLOWS HAS PASSED An excerpt from *The Excursion* by William Wordsworth

And when the stream that overflows has passed, a consciousness remains upon the silent shore of memory; images and precious thoughts that shall not be and cannot be destroyed.

27. THE REASSURANCE by Thom Gunn

About ten days or so
After we saw you dead
You came back in a dream.
I'm alright now you said.

And it was you, although
You were fleshed out again:
You hugged us all round then,
And gave your welcoming beam.

How like you to be so kind,
Seeking to reassure.
And, yes, how like my mind
To make itself secure.

28. ITHACA by C.P. Cavafy

As you set out on the journey to Ithaca
Wish that the way be long,
Full of adventures, full of knowledge.
Don't be afraid of Laistrygonians, the Cyclops,
Angry Poseidon, you'll never find them on your way
if your thought stays exalted, if a rare
Emotion touches your spirit and body.
You won't meet the Laistrygonians
And the Cyclops and wild Poseidon
If you don't bear them along in your soul,
If your soul doesn't raise them before you.

Wish that the way be long.
May there be many summer evenings
When with such pleasure, such joy
You enter ports seen for the first time;

May you stop in Phoenician emporia
To buy fine merchandise,
Mother-of-pearl and coral, amber and ebony
And every kind of perfume,
Buy abundant sensual perfumes, as many as you can
Travel to many Egyptian cities
To learn and learn from their scholars.

Always keep Ithaca in your mind
Arriving there is your destination
But don't hurry the journey at all,
Better it lasts many years,
And your moor on the island when you are old,
Rich with all you have gained along the way,
Not expecting Ithaca to make you rich.

Ithaca gave you the beautiful journey.
Without her you would not have set out on your way.
She has no more to give you.

And if you find her poor, Ithaca did not betray you.
With all your wisdom, all your experience,
You understand now what Ithacas mean.

29. SO MANY DIFFERENT LENGTHS OF TIME by Brian Patten

How long does a man live after all?
A thousand days or only one?
One week or a few centuries?
How long does a man spend living or dying
and what do we mean when we say gone forever?

Adrift in such preoccupations, we seek clarification.
We can go to the philosophers
but they will weary of our questions.
We can go to the priests and rabbis
but they might be busy with administrations.

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

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

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

And the days will pass with baffled faces,
then the weeks, then the months,
then there will be a day when no question is asked,
and the knots of grief will loosen in the stomach
and the puffed faces will calm.
And on that day he will not have ceased
but will have ceased to be separated by death.

How long does a man live after all?
A man lives so many different lengths of time.

30. THE BEAUTY OF DEATH by Kahlil Gibran Part 2 (excerpt)

I have passed a mountain peak and my soul is soaring in the
Firmament of complete and unbound freedom;
I am far, far away, my companions, and the clouds are
Hiding the hills from my eyes.
The valleys are becoming flooded with an ocean of silence, and the
Hands of oblivion are engulfing the roads and the houses;
The prairies and fields are disappearing behind a white specter
That looks like the spring cloud, yellow as the candlelight
And red as the twilight.

The songs of the waves and the hymns of the streams
Are scattered, and the voices of the throngs reduced to silence;
And I can hear naught but the music of Eternity
In exact harmony with the spirit's desires.
I am cloaked in full whiteness;
I am in comfort; I am in peace.

31. THE ODE OF REMEMBRANCE by Lawrence Binyon (excerpt from For The Fallen)

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.