Give sorrow words.
The grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'erfraught heart,
and bids it break.

~ W. Shakespeare

Talking to Grief
Ah, Grief, I should not treat you
like a homeless dog
who comes to the back door
for a crust, for a meatless bone.
I should trust you.

I should coax you
into the house and give you
your own corner,
a worn mat to lie on,
your own water dish.

You think I don't know you've been
living under my porch?
You long for your real place to be readied
before winter comes.
You need your name, your collar and tag.
You need the right to warn off intruders,
to consider my house your own
and me your person
and yourself
my own dog.

~ Denise Levertov

The Thing Is
The thing is
To love life
To love it even when you have no
Stomach for it, when everything you've held
Dear crumbles like burnt paper in your hands
And your throat is filled with the silt of it.
When grief sits with you so heavily
It is like heat, tropical, moist
Thickening the air so it's heavy like water
More fit for gills than lungs.
When grief weights you like your own flesh
Only more of it, an obesity of grief.
How long can a body withstand this, you think.
And yet you hold life like a face between your palms,
A plain face, with no charming smile
Or twinkle in her eye,
And you say, yes, I will take you
I will love you, again.

~ Ellen Bass

Grief
Grief deepens you. It allows you to explore the parameters of your soul. Grief is a gateway
to certain levels of understanding and it is a hard taskmaster ... grief forces you to look at these
parts of yourself that are not yet healed. If you can look at grief as a teaching, you will grow ...
the seeds of wisdom are planted within the wounds of grief.

~ Anonymous

Be patient with all that is unresolved in your heart,
and try to love the questions themselves.
Do not seek for answers that cannot be given,
for you would not be able to live them.
And the point is to live everything.
Live the questions now, and perhaps without knowing,
you will live along someday into the answers.

~ Rainer Maria Rilke
The Well of Grief

Those who will not slip beneath
the still surface on the well of grief
turning down to its black water
to the place that we can not breathe
will never know
the source from which we drink
the secret water cold and clear
nor find in the darkness
the small gold coins
thrown by those who wished
for something else.

~ David Whyte

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 forever; I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now: put out every one;
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood,
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

~ W.H. Auden

In Blackwater Woods

Look, the trees
are turning
their own bodies
into pillars
of light
are giving off the rich
fragrance of cinnamon
and fulfillment,
the long tapers
of cattails are bursting
and floating away over
the blue shoulders
of the ponds
and every pond,
no matter what its
name is,
is nameless now.

Every year
everything
I have learned
in my lifetime
leads back to this: the fires
and the black river of loss
whose other side
is salvation
whose meaning
none of us will ever know.

To live in this world
you must be able to
do three things:
to love that which is mortal;
to hold it against your
bones knowing
your life depends upon it;
and when the time comes
to let it go,
to let it go.

~ Mary Oliver

The Buddha’s Last Words

O bhikshus! Do not grieve! Even if I were to live in the world
for as long as a kalpa, our coming together would have to end.

You should know that all things in the world are impermanent;
coming together inevitably means parting. Do not be troubled,
for this is the nature of life. Diligently practicing right effort, you
must seek the way of liberation immediately. Within the light of
wisdom, destroy the darkness of ignorance. Nothing is secure.
Everything in this life is precarious ...

Time is passing. I am about to cross over. This is my final teaching.

~ the Parinirvana Sutra