

## Modern Readings

*Note: In the cases where a piece does not have a title I have identified how it can be used. Such entries are prepeneded with "Usage:"*

### ***Funeral – Usage: perfect for a Neo-Pagan***

That which came from the earth  
Has returned to the earth.

That which belonged to the spirit  
Has returned to the Ancient Ones.

The wheel turns.

That which belongs to fellowship and love —  
That which belongs to the circle —  
Remains with us.

*Nothing is final.*

No farewell is the last farewell.  
The wheel turns  
And we who remain behind  
Know that one day we will once again  
Share the bread and wine with our brother.

### ***A Meditation on Death by Sabina C. Becker***

Death is a piece of Life, not its opposite, not even its end, but merely one station of a larger cycle. We are born, we die, we are reborn in a different shape. Our bodies decompose and feed the flowers that feed the soil that feeds the crops that feed the livestock that feeds us. These are the facts of Life and Death: when something dies, it becomes a part of something else that lives.

### ***Usage: Need to go with in and give time to grieve by Molly Fumia***

The season of grief is our shutting down time. We prepare the cottage of our hearts for the winter, securing our windows to the world, stocking the cupboards with what will sustain us during the cold and the dark. Carefully we rebuild our inner fire, and huddle in its warmth while the storms of winter pass, awaiting a spring that will come as surely as the steady passage of the days.

### ***Music When Soft Voices Die (To –) by Percy Bysshe Shelley***

Music, when soft voices die,  
Vibrates in the memory—  
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,  
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,  
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;  
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,  
Love itself shall slumber on.

### ***Bread and Music by Conrad Aiken***

Music I heard with you was more than music,  
And bread I broke with you was more than bread;

Now that I am without you, all is desolate;  
All that was once so beautiful is dead.

Your hands once touched this table and this silver,  
And I have seen your fingers hold this glass.  
These things do not remember you, beloved,  
And yet your touch upon them will not pass.

For it was in my heart you moved among them,  
And blessed them with your hands and with your eyes;  
And in my heart they will remember always,—  
They knew you once, O beautiful and wise.

***Usage: Acknowledges grief and acceptance***

Gentle clouds trace the sweep of your angel wing.  
Your smile set the Heavens aglow.  
Without you my world is dark and cold.  
Shining Star,  
I wrap your memory around me  
and continue on this path  
to find you again.

***Inspired by an Eskimo legend***

Perhaps they are not the stars,  
but rather openings in Heaven  
where the love of our lost ones  
pours through and  
shines down upon us  
to let us know  
they are happy.

***Eulogy by Mark Twain***

Warm summer sun, shine kindly here;  
Warm southern wind, blow softly here;  
Green sod above, lie light, lie light —  
Good night, dear heart, good night, good night.

***For Lovers By Yakmochi – translated by Kenneht Rexroth***

We were together  
Only a little while,  
And we believed our love  
Would last a thousand years.

***Funeral Bliss by W.H Auden***

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 policeman 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;  
Pick 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.

***Usage: Healing will come by Molly Fumia***

The season of grief is our shutting down time. We prepare the cottage of our hearts for the winter, securing our windows to the world, stocking the cupboards with what will sustain us during the cold and dark. Carefully we rebuild our inner fire, and huddle in its warmth while the storms of winter pass, awaiting a spring that will come as surely as the steady passage of the days.

***Usage: Possibly good for near end of ceremony by Molly Fumia***

Go where you will be healed, but take someone along who loves you, who will listen along the way, and with whom you can share a quiet toast when you reach your destination.

***Usage: Losing someone should change us by Molly Fumia***

Life will not go on the same way without her. If it were the same, we could only conclude her life meant nothing, made no contribution. The fact that she left behind a place that cannot be filled is a high tribute to the uniqueness of her soul.

***Usage: Remembering those who are gone is a gift by Molly Fumia***

Now that he is gone, never hesitate to tell his story. He has left you behind with treasures to be shared. When you remember, your memories are sent far into the future, a sweet heritage for all those who will come after..

***Usage: Everything passes away by Molly Fumia***

The moon and the year  
Travel and pass away:  
Also the day, also the wind.  
Also the flesh passes away  
To the place of its quietness.

***Usage: Death cannot part friends by William Penn, from "Union of Friends"***

They that love beyond the World, cannot be separated by it.  
Death cannot kill, what never dies.  
Nor can Spirits ever be divided that love and live in the same  
Divine Principle; the Root and Record of their Friendship.  
If Absence be not death, neither is theirs.

Death is but Crossing the World, as Friends do the  
Seas; they live in one another still.

**Usage: To have loved is enough by James Joyce**

Gentle lady, do not sing  
Sad songs about the end of love;  
Lay aside sadness and sing  
How love that passes is enough.

**Usage: Healing will come by Abraham Lincoln**

In this sad world of ours, sorrow comes to all.

Perfect relief is not possible, except with time.

You cannot now realize that you will ever feel better.

And yet this is a mistake.

You are sure to be happy again.

To know this, which is certainly true,

will make you less miserable now.

I have experienced this enough to know what I say.

**Kaddish; Usage: For your mother by David Ignatow**

...

Earth is your mother as you were mine, my earth,  
my sustenance, my comfort, and my strength,  
and now without you turn to your mother  
and seek from her that I may meet you again  
in rock and stone: whisper to the stone,  
I love you; whisper to the rock, I found you;  
whisper to the earth, Mother, I have found my mother  
and I am safe and always have been.

**Usage: Have no more fear by Shakespeare (with one rewritten verse)**

Fear No More the Heat of the Sun, nor the Furious Winter's Rages. Thou thy Worldly Task has done; Home art gone, and ta'en thy Wages. Golden Lads and Girls all must, as Chimney-Sweepers, come to dust.

Fear No More the Frown of the Great; thou art past the Tyrant's Stroke. Care No More to Clothe or Eat: to thee, the Reed is as the Oak. The Scepter, Learning, Physic, must all follow This and come to Dust.

(Rewritten Verse)

Hear, Nature, hear! Great Goddess, Hear! Crown them with Flowers, and make them Your Joy— Who taught us to love Thee.

Quiet Consummation have— and Renowned be thy Grave.

Usage: Death makes an impression by Hermann Broch

Our dead brothers still live for us and bid us think of life, not death — of life to which in their youth they lent the passion and glory of Spring. As I listen, the great chorus of life and joy begins again, and amid the awful orchestra of seen and unseen powers and destinies of good and evil, our trumpets, sound once more a note of daring, hope, and will.

**Usage: There is no such thing as death by Charles Mackay**

There is no such thing as death. In nature nothing dies. From each sad remnant of decay, some forms of life arise so shall his life be taken away before he knoweth that he hath it.

***I Only Wanted You Vicky Holder***

(Suggestion: Change God to the Gods)

They say memories are golden  
well maybe that is true.  
I never wanted memories,  
I only wanted you.

A million times I needed you,  
a million times I cried.  
If love alone could have saved you  
you never would have died.

In life I loved you dearly,  
In death I love you still.  
In my heart you hold a place  
no one could ever fill.

If tears could build a stairway  
and heartache make a lane,  
I'd walk the path to heaven  
and bring you back again.

Our family chain is broken,  
and nothing seems the same.  
But as God calls us one by one,  
the chain will link again.